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LEAVES ON THE TIDE



HIRAM RICH

127. 128. 129. 130. 131. 132. 133. 134. 135. 136. 137. 138. 139. 140. 141. 142. 143. 144. 145. 146. 147. 148. 149. 150. 151. 152. 153. 154. 155. 156. 157. 158. 159. 160. 161. 162. 163. 164. 165. 166. 167. 168. 169. 170. 171. 172. 173. 174. 175. 176. 177. 178. 179. 180. 181. 182. 183. 184. 185. 186. 187. 188. 189. 190. 191. 192. 193. 194. 195. 196. 197. 198. 199. 200. 201. 202. 203. 204. 205. 206. 207. 208. 209. 210. 211. 212. 213. 214. 215. 216. 217. 218. 219. 220. 221. 222. 223. 224. 225. 226. 227. 228. 229. 230. 231. 232. 233. 234. 235. 236. 237. 238. 239. 240. 241. 242. 243. 244. 245. 246. 247. 248. 249. 250. 251. 252. 253. 254. 255. 256. 257. 258. 259. 260. 261. 262. 263. 264. 265. 266. 267. 268. 269. 270. 271. 272. 273. 274. 275. 276. 277. 278. 279. 280. 281. 282. 283. 284. 285. 286. 287. 288. 289. 290. 291. 292. 293. 294. 295. 296. 297. 298. 299. 300. 301. 302. 303. 304. 305. 306. 307. 308. 309. 310. 311. 312. 313. 314. 315. 316. 317. 318. 319. 320. 321. 322. 323. 324. 325. 326. 327. 328. 329. 330. 331. 332. 333. 334. 335. 336. 337. 338. 339. 340. 341. 342. 343. 344. 345. 346. 347. 348. 349. 350. 351. 352. 353. 354. 355. 356. 357. 358. 359. 360. 361. 362. 363. 364. 365. 366. 367. 368. 369. 370. 371. 372. 373. 374. 375. 376. 377. 378. 379. 380. 381. 382. 383. 384. 385. 386. 387. 388. 389. 390. 391. 392. 393. 394. 395. 396. 397. 398. 399. 400. 401. 402. 403. 404. 405. 406. 407. 408. 409. 410. 411. 412. 413. 414. 415. 416. 417. 418. 419. 420. 421. 422. 423. 424. 425. 426. 427. 428. 429. 430. 431. 432. 433. 434. 435. 436. 437. 438. 439. 440. 441. 442. 443. 444. 445. 446. 447. 448. 449. 450. 451. 452. 453. 454. 455. 456. 457. 458. 459. 460. 461. 462. 463. 464. 465. 466. 467. 468. 469. 470. 471. 472. 473. 474. 475. 476. 477. 478. 479. 480. 481. 482. 483. 484. 485. 486. 487. 488. 489. 490. 491. 492. 493. 494. 495. 496. 497. 498. 499. 500. 501. 502. 503. 504. 505. 506. 507. 508. 509. 510. 511. 512. 513. 514. 515. 516. 517. 518. 519. 520. 521. 522. 523. 524. 525. 526. 527. 528. 529. 530. 531. 532. 533. 534. 535. 536. 537. 538. 539. 540. 541. 542. 543. 544. 545. 546. 547. 548. 549. 550. 551. 552. 553. 554. 555. 556. 557. 558. 559. 560. 561. 562. 563. 564. 565. 566. 567. 568. 569. 570. 571. 572. 573. 574. 575. 576. 577. 578. 579. 580. 581. 582. 583. 584. 585. 586. 587. 588. 589. 590. 591. 592. 593. 594. 595. 596. 597. 598. 599. 600. 601. 602. 603. 604. 605. 606. 607. 608. 609. 610. 611. 612. 613. 614. 615. 616. 617. 618. 619. 620. 621. 622. 623. 624. 625. 626. 627. 628. 629. 630. 631. 632. 633. 634. 635. 636. 637. 638. 639. 640. 641. 642. 643. 644. 645. 646. 647. 648. 649. 650. 651. 652. 653. 654. 655. 656. 657. 658. 659. 660. 661. 662. 663. 664. 665. 666. 667. 668. 669. 670. 671. 672. 673. 674. 675. 676. 677. 678. 679. 680. 681. 682. 683. 684. 685. 686. 687. 688. 689. 690. 691. 692. 693. 694. 695. 696. 697. 698. 699. 700. 701. 702. 703. 704. 705. 706. 707. 708. 709. 710. 711. 712. 713. 714. 715. 716. 717. 718. 719. 720. 721. 722. 723. 724. 725. 726. 727. 728. 729. 730. 731. 732. 733. 734. 735. 736. 737. 738. 739. 740. 741. 742. 743. 744. 745. 746. 747. 748. 749. 750. 751. 752. 753. 754. 755. 756. 757. 758. 759. 760. 761. 762. 763. 764. 765. 766. 767. 768. 769. 770. 771. 772. 773. 774. 775. 776. 777. 778. 779. 780. 781. 782. 783. 784. 785. 786. 787. 788. 789. 790. 791. 792. 793. 794. 795. 796. 797. 798. 799. 800. 801. 802. 803. 804. 805. 806. 807. 808. 809. 810. 811. 812. 813. 814. 815. 816. 817. 818. 819. 820. 821. 822. 823. 824. 825. 826. 827. 828. 829. 830. 831. 832. 833. 834. 835. 836. 837. 838. 839. 840. 841. 842. 843. 844. 845. 846. 847. 848. 849. 850. 851. 852. 853. 854. 855. 856. 857. 858. 859. 860. 861. 862. 863. 864. 865. 866. 867. 868. 869. 870. 871. 872. 873. 874. 875. 876. 877. 878. 879. 880. 881. 882. 883. 884. 885. 886. 887. 888. 889. 890. 891. 892. 893. 894. 895. 896. 897. 898. 899. 900. 901. 902. 903. 904. 905. 906. 907. 908. 909. 910. 911. 912. 913. 914. 915. 916. 917. 918. 919. 920. 921. 922. 923. 924. 925. 926. 927. 928. 929. 930. 931. 932. 933. 934. 935. 936. 937. 938. 939. 940. 941. 942. 943. 944. 945.

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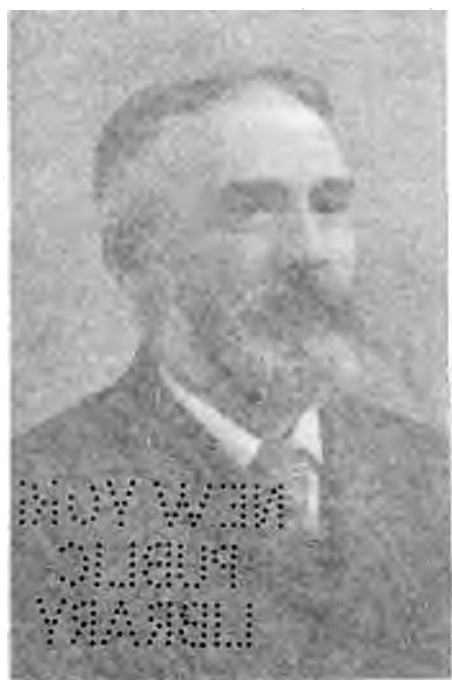
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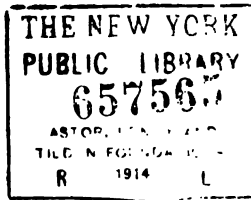
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1913



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TO
THE AUTHOR'S GRANDCHILDREN

NEW YORK
1914
THE
PUBLISHERS

WAVE
2000
VOLUME

1

NOTE

THE author of this volume, like Edmund Clarence Stedman, was a banker-poet. For many years he led an active business life in the city of Gloucester, Massachusetts, but his hours of leisure were largely given to books and literature. A considerable number of poems from his pen were printed in the *Atlantic Monthly*, *Scribner's Magazine*, the *Independent*, and other periodicals, but they were never gathered by him for book publication. It has seemed to his children, and to his friend the publisher, that a collection should be made of the published poems, and of others that were written for special occasions or are representative of his wide interest and his poetic gift.

The opening group in the present volume — "Leaves on the Tide" — was so named by Mr. Howells when he used the half dozen pieces in the *Atlantic* for October, 1875. It is interesting to recall Mr. Howells's reference to Mr. Rich in his "Recollections of an Atlantic Editorship," written for the Fiftieth Anniversary Number of the magazine. Speaking of the welcome that, as an editor, he gave to the work of Maurice Thompson, he adds that "he accepted every one of the twelve pieces

offered him by Hiram Rich of Gloucester, Massachusetts, with as deep a pleasure in their new touch."

Probably the author would have made slight revisions in some of the unpublished poems, if this book had been compiled during his lifetime; but the publisher has been at special pains to secure accurate copies of the manuscripts, and has also sought to make the volume a fit receptacle for the poet's work.

Boston, November, 1913.

CONTENTS

LEAVES ON THE TIDE

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| LEAVES ON THE TIDE | 1 |
| AFTER BARREN MAYS | 2 |
| AN IMMORTELLE | 3 |
| SEEKING | 4 |
| ONLY A GLIMPSE | 5 |
| SAND CASTLES | 7 |

LAND AND SEA

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| LAND AND SEA | 8 |
| AFTER | 9 |
| DIFFERENCE, THE | 10 |
| DRIFTWOOD GATHERER, THE | 11 |
| FISHERMAN'S FEINT, THE | 11 |
| IDLER'S IDYL, AN | 12 |
| JERRY AN' ME | 13 |
| LOOKED-FOR | 15 |
| SUNSET | 16 |
| THRIFT | 17 |
| UNFULFILLED | 18 |
| WHO KNOWS? | 20 |
| WIND'S REPLY, THE | 21 |

INCIDENTS OF CHILD LIFE

| | |
|----------------------------|----|
| WHILE I MAY | 22 |
| AN INTRUDER | 23 |
| HER BOUQUET | 24 |
| OUT OF THE STORM | 26 |
| IT SEEMS | 27 |

COMMEMORATIVE

| | |
|--|----|
| ON THE LOSS OF THE ONEIDA | 29 |
| A DAY OF DAYS | 30 |
| VERSES READ AT THE HUNDREDTH BIRTHDAY RE-
CEPTION OF MRS. MARY H. GILBERT. | 34 |
| LINES READ AT THE "PROCTER GATHERING" | 35 |
| THE PARTING WORD | 39 |
| DAY UNTO DAY. READ AT THE TWO HUNDRED AND
FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SETTLEMENT OF
GLOUCESTER | 42 |

TRANSLATIONS

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----|
| ANSWER, THE | 51 |
| BOHEMIAN MELODY, A | 51 |
| BOHEMIAN MELODIES | 52 |
| BRIDGES | 53 |
| DREAM, THE | 54 |
| FLOWER OF SUBMISSION, THE | 55 |
| IN A GARDEN | 56 |
| IN AUTUMN | 57 |
| LYING BIRD, THE | 58 |
| MIST | 59 |
| MORAVIAN MELODY, A | 59 |
| OCEAN OF HOPE, THE | 60 |
| ONE OUT OF MANY | 60 |
| ON THE LAKE | 61 |
| REARED IN A ROOM | 62 |
| ROSE AND THORN | 65 |
| SLAVONIC MELODY, A | 66 |
| SPRING | 66 |
| TO ONE AT A DISTANCE | 67 |
| TO THE ABSENT | 68 |
| TO THE WIND | 69 |

CONTENTS

xi

IN THE SEA

| | |
|-------------------------------|----|
| IN THE SEA | 71 |
| BLOWN OFF | 72 |
| COAST-WISE | 75 |
| FISHERMEN, THE | 77 |
| MISLED | 78 |
| NIGHT'S PERIL, A | 78 |
| ON THE BRINK | 80 |
| ONE PORT ALONE | 80 |
| RESTLESS, THE | 81 |
| SAILOR'S DITTY, A | 85 |
| SKIPPER HERMIT, THE | 86 |
| YOUR BARK AND MINE | 89 |
| AFTERGLOW, AN | 91 |
| AFTER ALL | 93 |

MISCELLANEOUS

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-----|
| "AMONG THE HILLS" | 94 |
| ARBUTUSING | 94 |
| BEFORE AND AFTER | 95 |
| BENISON, A | 98 |
| BESET | 98 |
| BEYOND THE BOOK | 100 |
| BOOK-LOVER TO HIS BOOKS, A | 102 |
| BREAD AND SONG | 103 |
| BROOK-LIFE | 104 |
| BUILDING | 105 |
| CHANCES, THE | 106 |
| DAYS, THE | 107 |
| FALLEN CASTLE, THE | 108 |
| FAR DEMESNE, A | 109 |
| FEVER FANTASY, A | 111 |
| GLIMPSSES | 111 |

| | |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| HALF-WAY | 112 |
| HER CARE | 114 |
| HYMN OF LIFE | 115 |
| IN A QUARRY | 117 |
| IN DEBT | 118 |
| INTERCHANGE | 119 |
| LATER VIEW, A | 120 |
| MAID OF ALLEVOU | 121 |
| MILLER'S MADRIGAL, A | 123 |
| MORGAN STANWOOD | 125 |
| NOVEMBER | 129 |
| NOW | 130 |
| OVER | 133 |
| OVERNIGHT | 134 |
| QUESTION AND ANSWER | 135 |
| RETURN, THE | 136 |
| ROUTINE | 137 |
| SEEKER, THE | 138 |
| SOUL'S DOUBT, A | 139 |
| STILL TENANTED | 140 |
| SUMMER MOOD, A | 141 |
| THOROUGHFARE, A | 142 |
| TOO EARLY | 144 |
| TOO TRUE | 146 |
| UNSEEN HANDS | 147 |
| WANDERER, A | 147 |
| WHO HATH NOT | 150 |
| WHY? | 150 |
| WIND THE CLOCK | 151 |
| WOMAN'S PRAISE, A | 152 |
| INDEX OF TITLES | 155 |

LEAVES ON THE TIDE

LEAVES ON THE TIDE

I

LEAVES ON THE TIDE

Who that sees a flowing tide
Can resist the wish to throw,
On its subtle influence,
Leaf or like, to see it go?

I cannot: the stream goes by,
And I drop upon it here,
From the rose of life, a leaf,
Light and warm, or brown and sere.

If you see the warm and light
Floating down and down to you,
You will know the heart is near,
Whence the bud so lately grew.

If you see the brown alone,
Here or not though I may be,
You will know that sun and rain
Somewhere have been sweet to me.

So upon the creeping tide
Now and then a leaf I throw;
If a heart shall greet it, well;
If it sink, — the roses grow.

II

AFTER BARREN MAYS

AN apple tree, dead long ago
To further hope of pink and snow, —

Lone sorrow of the wayside there,
An empty nest its only care, —

Spring, in a rapture after rain,
Kissed partly into bloom again.

So have we known a melody
Come in a dream from buried days;
So have we seen a life grow sweet
With blossom after barren Mays.

It seems there is not anything
Beyond the chance of blossoming,

Nor any day too dead to be
A better day in memory,

Nor any life — the barrenest —
But hath some dear, old, empty nest.

III

AN IMMORTELLE

A LITTLE while the roses bloom,
A little while the soft winds blow,
A little while the baby laughed,
A little while, — from bud to snow.

But after all the rose was sweet,
And after all the winds have blown,
And after all the baby blessed,
And after all it is our own.

If in our thought the rose remains,
And winds are sweet in memory,
Why should not then the baby gone
Forever be a babe to me ?

IV

SEEKING

FROM my door the river winds
In and out among the creeks,
Looking, and whate'er it finds,
Never finding what it seeks.

For anon it turns again
Toward the sea that drinks it in,
Where the dory fishermen
Daily bread would daily win.

Day by day and year by year,
Come and go the sea and wind;
I am like the river here,
Seeking what I never find.

V

ONLY A GLIMPSE

ONLY a bit of the highway sunning itself on the
hill,
By it the beautiful river singing a song in the mill.

Only a bit of the highway I see as I sit by the
door,
And the valley is pleasant behind it and the valley
is pleasant before.

People come out of the valley and into the valley
they go,
A shadow doth ferry the river, under a piloting
crow.

'T is but a moment I see them, — only a glimpse I
obtain;
What do I know of their losses? what do they know
of my gain?

I know they are bearing their burdens as I know
that I do mine,
And I know they have their gladness, no happier,
heart, than thine.

For never a highway windeth over the earth, but
there
Feet of the happy are on it, — feet that are followed
by care.

The shadow that ferried the river hath fallen asleep
on the sea,
And the river, unheard by the miller, is singing a
song in me.

Only a glimpse of the highway I get as I sit by the
door,
But it hints of the journey behind me and the jour-
ney, remaining, before.

VI

SAND CASTLES

Two children were making the most of the day,
In the sand their castles building,
While out in the harbor the sunset gold
Was every vessel gilding.

But the sea came over the castles dear,
And the charm of the sunset faded;
Oh! after a labor is lost may we
Go happily home as they did.

For we build and build in a different way,
Till our heads are wise and hoary;
But after it all the sun goes down,
And the sea — 't is a common story.

LAND AND SEA

LAND AND SEA

THE green land sings her song of praise
And drinks the wine of summer days;
From noon to noon, from dark to bright,
She blossoms over with delight;
Her daisies, that are dead to you,
To me are full of golden dew.

The blue sea lacks not anything
That man can say or maiden sing;
But what it says itself, or sings,
Is but the thought the hearer brings —
The maiden hears a wedding glee,
The sailor what the wind will be.

AFTER

THERE were ships upon the sea,
There were shells upon the shore;
Seemed a voice to say to me:
"Choose a ship from all at sea,
Choose a shell from all ashore."

From the sails a sail I chose,
From the shells a rosy shell.
Now the ship my purpose knows;
Now the shell is like a rose
That is given with farewell.

"Name them now," a fancy bade;
And I named them both for thee.
Ne'er such things thy name hath had;
Never lover were so glad
As thy lover, Poesy!

It was all a dream, you know —
Never such a choice were mine;
But of all the ships that go,
And of all the shells that glow,
One doth all the rest outshine.

Shell as holy as the grail,
Colorless to careless eyes;

THE DIFFERENCE

Ship of all the ships that sail,
Though you fade to some and fail,
You will glow for me and rise.

Blessed be the chance to dream —
For a moment, if no more —
If the things we dream of gleam,
If they ever after seem
Dearer than they did before.

THE DIFFERENCE

MEN loose their ships, — the eager things, —
To try their luck at sea,
But none can tell by note or count,
How many there may be;
One turneth east, another south, —
They never come again;
And then we know they must have sunk,
But neither how nor when.
God sends his happy birds abroad;
“They’re less than ships,” say we;
No moment passes but He knows
How many there should be.
One buildeth high, another low,
With just a bird’s light care, —
If only one, perchance, doth fall,
God knoweth when and where.

THE DRIFTWOOD GATHERER

ASHORE, a broken man, he eyed
A broken spar afloat;
Of winging cloud and ship and gull
He took nor heed nor note.
Rapt as a lone astronomer,
Or like a brooding alchemist,
He eyed it, every stay and stir,
He marked it, every turn and twist.
Anon, his palsy-smitten hand
Drew the rare prize upon the land.
But, O dear God, there with it came ashore
His dead boy's jacket: — that he homeward bore.

THE FISHERMAN'S FEINT

She

"I STAND in the dark on the shore,
I hear the quick dip of an oar,
And the rower, I know him, is near.
The boat, oh! the boat has gone by
In the dark, in the silence, and I,
Deluded, forsaken, am here."

He

"I get not a glimpse of her hand,
But I know she is there on the land,
Where she promised to meet me at ten.
I'll row right away to my net,
She will hear me and wonder and fret —
Fret and be loving again."

We

If we stood in the dark on the shore,
If we heard the near dip of an oar,
And the rower went by us, ah! then,
If after a little we met,
Would we in a moment forget,
Kiss and be loving again?

AN IDLER'S IDYL

A BORROWED boat, a certain sky,
A tide whereon to dream and drift,
Delay that never seems delay,
Are more to me than gain or gift.

A boat is broader than a hearth,
To borrow better than to own,
For Care is in a manner blind,
And follows thrift by touch alone.

The miller's heart is in his toil,
The sower's thoughts plod to and fro,
And who hath anything at sea
Forebodeth winds that never blow.

Then, Life, for thee the idle oar,
A drowsy tide to drift upon,
An air that hints of hills new-mown,
To lull thee when thy dreams come on.

JERRY AN' ME

No matter how the chances are,
Nor when the winds may blow,
My Jerry there has left the sea
With all its luck an' woe!
For who would try the sea at all,
Must try it luck or no.

They told him — for men take no care
How words they speak may fall —
They told him blunt, he was too old,
Too slow with oar an' trawl,
An' this is how he left the sea
An' luck an' woe an' all.

Take any man on sea or land
Out of his beaten way,

JERRY AN' ME

If he is young 't will do, but then,
If he is old an' gray,
A month will be a year to him,
Be all to him you may.

He sits by me, but most he walks
The door-yard for a deck,
An' scans the boat a-goin' out
Till she becomes a speck,
Then turns away, his face as wet
As if she were a wreck.

The men who haul the net an' line
Are never rich; an' you,
My Johnny here, — a grown-up man, —
Is man an' baby too,
An' we have naught for rainy days,
An' rainy days are due.

My Jerry, diffident, abroad
Is restless as a brook,
An' when he left the boat an' all,
Home had an empty look;
But I will win him by an' by
To like the window-nook.

I cannot bring him back again
The days when we were wed,
But he shall never know — my man —
The lack o' love or bread,

While I can cast a stitch or fill
A needleful o' thread.

God pity me, I 'd most forgot
How many yet there be,
Whose goodmen full as old as mine
Are somewhere on the sea,
Who hear the breakin' bar an' think
O' Jerry home an' — me.

LOOKED-FOR

“ALL the apple blooms are open and the bees are in
a flurry,
While I walk the headland orchard, by the sail-
beclouded sea,
— The single sail I look for 's a long time
a-coming —
And a day is longer now than a summer used to be.

“Every night I make a beacon of my little chamber
window;
Often at the door I listen, with my hand upon the
key;
— The single sail I look for 's a long time
a-coming —
But the sudden footstep in it hath no echo of the
sea.

"All my baby-sewing finished, I am knitting, only
knitting,
For he loves to find me idle-like when coming home
from sea;
— The single sail I look for 's a long time
a-coming —
But a day without my needle is a weary one to me."

All the apple blooms are fallen and the idle bees are
dreaming,
And deserted is the orchard by the sail-forsaken sea;
The only ship she looked for is anchored in the har-
bor,
And a sailor sits at supper with a happy *vis-à-vis*.

SUNSET

SELDOM seems a sky so bright
As the sunset sky to-night;
Yet it lieth far away,
While I walk in twilight gray!

Lo! but here a bit of tide,
Hemmed by rock on either side,
Gleams, and in itself content
With a gleam yon sky hath sent.

Bit of sky so far and bright,
Why doth thy forgetful light,

While the day is leaving me,
Think to bless that bit of sea?

Tide, thy wall of rock about
Cannot keep that gleam without!
Sky, could'st thou withhold thy mite
From that lonely pool to-night?

Golden sky, thou seem'st to be
Some illumined memory;
Bit of sea, thou seem'st some heart
From that memory apart!

By a bridge I cannot see
Comes that far-off memory;
Heart, that memory is thine!
Heart, thy memories are mine!

THRIFT

My ships are blown about the world,
From Heart's Content to iceless Ind;
The tides play out, the winds come down,
And perils follow tide and wind.

When Fancy tricks me into dreams,
I see my love in royal rooms, —

More than a queen when all are queens,
And kings beside her seem like grooms.

Meanwhile she spins her wheel indoors,
Beginning when the days begin;
"We shall not want," — her very words, —
"Though never ship of thine come in."

UNFULFILLED

I

Our little table is spread for two,
With quaint old china, gold and blue;

Weird things are wrought on the homely walls,
As the conjuring firelight climbs and falls;

In the corner my ready sea chest stands,
Filled to the brim by the busiest hands;

Wife mirrors her face in the silver tongs;
I think of the morrow's rude sea songs.

"I have pictures, love," she says, "that gleam
From a troubled easel — last night's dream:

"A ship ashore on a cruel reef,
And a woman wringing her hands in grief.

"She kneels in prayer; a whirlwind wheel
Grows out of the dead ship's plank and keel.

"She stands in the spinner's toiling place,
Till the rose in her cheek hath lost its grace.

"Her lessening form is changed to wool,
Yet the hungering spindle ne'er is full.

"A weed-grown raft keeps company
With a vacant boat on a sailless sea."

How apt is woman's thought to build,
Where a varying dream may darken or gild.

II

Life flies; my last sea voyage is done;
Or wind, or calm, to me 't is one.

Tea things are set for a golden few;
Again our china, quaint and blue;

The conjuring home-light climbs and crawls
O'er dainty laces and India shawls;

Wife mirrors her face in the silver tongs;
I think of yesterday's glad sea songs.

"Tell, love, I pray, of the ship on the reef,
And the woman wringing her hands in grief;

"Of the spinner whose white arms changed to wool,
And the hungering spindle that ne'er grew full."

There are tears imprisoned within her eyes,
Which are loosened soon, as her voice replies:

"Woman will dream, and man will build,
And each will have prophecies unfulfilled."

WHO KNOWS?

THE lighthouse keeper rises,
Perchance from dreams of wreck,
To trim his lamp, at midnight,
Though but a tiny speck
To some glad eye that sees it
From some far-distant deck.

The keeper thinks how little
His light beyond him glows!
And yet he trims and fills it,
And all the while who knows
What sailor-boy may bless it
Who to his hammock goes?

THE WIND'S REPLY

21

And so I think of duty
If it be truly done —
A little light kept burning
From sun to other sun —
Who knows what heart may bless it
And win what may be won?

THE WIND'S REPLY

“JUNE hath her heart in the frolic of Summer,
Roses declare for my bridal feast:
Wind of the sea! do you study to gladden?
When will my lover sail in from the East?”

Maidens, one the sweet mate of the other,
Every day to the sea go down,
Hearing the Wind say over and over,
“Weddings must wait, if ships will drown.”

INCIDENTS OF CHILD LIFE

WHILE I MAY

"PAPA, shut the book, please; let us play together;
I'll be Patty Wotton in her gown o' gray,
Mamma'll be a lady buying all my berries,
And you will pay in silver, — papa, what you
say?"

Pages of the poets, open at your sweetest,
You will be to-morrow what you are to-day;
But the sunny eyes here, if I now deny them,
When I fain would meet them may have turned
away.

Singing birds are song-full only in the springtime,
Blossoms will be blossoms only for a day,
Golden hair is golden but a little longer,
So I'll make your heart light, darling, while I may.

Ever-willing Fancy, charm away the present,
Summon all thy magic, honor-bright, in play;
Let my little maiden, in her seventh summer,
Be a wrinkled woman in a gown o' gray.

AN INTRUDER

BABY has been here, it seems —
Baby Annie, on the wing —
In my little library,
Plundering and reveling.

Annie dear, the darling witch —
See how innocent she looks —
But she has a world of wiles
When she gets among my books.

Half the time, I own, she seems
Less a being than a star;
Then again I cry, "My books!
Annie, what a rogue you are!"

"No, no —" papa cries in vain;
Down the dainty volumes come;
"Papa, here you are no king,
I am queen in babydom."

Stately Johnson lies in grief
Under laughing Rabelais;
Emerson is flat for once;
Heine 's thumbing Thackeray.

HER BOUQUET

Whittier, O poet rare!
Thou hast many pages less;
But if all were gone but one,
That would hold and charm or bless.

Baby with the double crown,
And the laughter-haunted eyes,
Papa's sanctum, volume-strewn,
Is to thee a Paradise.

I forgive thee when I feel
Breath and lips upon me pressed,
Sweet as any alien air
Blown from harbors of the blest.

"Papa," something whispers me,
"Better every laden shelf
Emptied by her baby hands
Than the house all to thyself."

HER BOUQUET

THE summer flowers were fled,
An autumn wind grew fretful in the eaves;
My little daughter from the garden brought
A couple of dead leaves.

She called them her bouquet,
And in her silver drinking-cup enshrined
No doubt they seemed to her young eyes as sweet
As blossoms unconfined.

I said within myself:

“These leaves, that once in sun and silence
played,
Have had their day, and yet a little hand
Exalts them, unafraid.

“O fallen, gathered leaves,
Ye bring again the mating of the birds,
The wonder of the springtime, bloom and all,
And thoughts that need no words!

“Ye are my little songs;
After the days that bred ye are gone by,
After the lips that sang ye sing no more,
Come back again, and I —

“I find ye silver-set
By one who makes her drinking-cup thy vase,
And ye are less to me, far less to me,
Than smiles upon her face.”

I cannot tell her now,
These leaves, my dear, are dead and valueless;

Since her sweet thought hath chosen them and
 charmed
 Away their nothingness.

So my dead springs become,
 By the dear art of my delighted fay,
Warm with another light, a newer grace
 To me, like her bouquet.

OUT OF THE STORM

PAPA struggles homeward through the snow,
Bitterly waylay him wind and snow,
But he sees, as he were there, a rosy room,
And the faces lifted, leaning — ah! you know,
Easy-chair and waiting slippers, gown and all —
Bitter snowflakes now like tiny blossoms fall.

Papa battles stoutly on and on,
Little faces from the window disappear.
Happy fingers lift the latch and swing the door —
Papa's coming, papa's coming, papa's here.
Cozy chair and on his forehead fingers warm,
Care may wing herself away upon the storm.

Papa shuts his eyes a minute just
In the comfort, in the odor all so sweet,
And he sees as from afar his Father's house

Which he neareth with the storm about his feet.
Little eyes are peering through the narrow night,
And a door of light is opened into light.

Care is left behind him in the dark,
Outer garments drops he by the door;
Children, little children lead him in,
He hath loved and lost them long before;
Those eyelids then two could not kiss them down;
Ringlets severed, dead, are grown again brook-
brown.

Child-like in all they strive to gladden him;
One offers papa half her baby chair,
Her little chair, so like a vacant one, —
That vacant one, child, was it here or there?
Now sudden accents break his reverie —
“Has 'ou an owange, papa dea', fo' me?”

IT SEEMS

WE laid our little boy away
In lily-sweet repose:
Buried, the favor of his cheek
Will bring the perfect rose.

The morning with her glory on
Comes up this wood and way;

And yet it takes the thought of him
To make the perfect day.

Though blossoms breathe till winds are sweet,
And brook and *birdie* croon;
The more I think, the more it seems,
His is the perfect June.

COMMÉMORATIVE
ON THE LOSS OF THE ONEIDA

AMERICA, lament,
For thou hast need to weep, —
An hundred of thy sailors
Forsaken in the deep.

No tender rites were theirs,
Nor slow and solemn train;
Their burial guns they thundered
To a deaf and deathful main.

Story and song shall tell,
Oneida, of thy men,
And when the story endeth,
Song shall begin again;

Story and song shall tell,
And ere the song is done,
The hearer will be eager
To hear the tale begun.

A DAY OF DAYS

Rather, O land bereaved,
Thy dead son with his name,
Than England's living captain —
With England's living shame,

For there shall fill the sea,
That saw her colors dip,
Those final words of Williams,
"I go down with my ship."

Now that his words are thine,
O Nation, do thy part:
Let wheel and capstan wear them, —
Print them on every chart.

Britannia, lament,
For thou hast need to weep, —
An hundred brother-sailors
Left in the deathful deep.

A DAY OF DAYS

"One of those heavenly days that cannot die"

How needless seems the breath of song
I bring, this day of days,
When everything I hear and see
Outsings me or outsays!

This homestead dear, those hills aloof,
The leaning, listening trees,
Your faces lit by youth or years, —
What song can color these?

O happy pair to whom to-day
So many feet are led,
Whatever words our thought may call,
The sweetest stay unsaid;
For when with gladness overcome
And loving lips would speak,
They fail, then eye must answer eye,
And cheek enkindle cheek.

O husband, father, brother, friend,
And cheery grandsire, too,
How proudly one and all we claim
A heart-warm hand from you!
How glad we are to find the years
Have left your heart so light! —
How glad to see they took the dark
And only left the bright!

O wife and mother, grandma, friend,
And sister dear and true,
The light that hath been his to see,
How he hath shared with you!
How have the years that kept him young,
Considered you as well!

And if they 've stolen aught from you,
To-day they do not tell.

Though frost and winter visit some
To hold both hope and will,
To you they cannot seem to come, —
A charm is on the sill:
A charm is on the sill to throw
A happier within,
Where years begin in peace and grow,
And end as they begin.

O sons and daughters, blessing, blest,
This golden light doth fall,
The more than golden chain it leaves
Will bind you, one to all.
Though mountain-ranges stood between
You and the homestead door,
Your feet have passed them all to tread
One little spot once more.

This little spot, ah! well may you
A thousand ranges pass,
To float the tide of childhood down,
Or turn the new-mown grass!
And well may you, or near or far,
Uncounted chances miss,
To find that father's welcome-smile, —
To meet that mother's kiss.

The absent few, though far away,
Your love doth overlean;
These children's children scarcely know
The moment of this scene;
How will remembrance of it grow
Beneath their coming skies,
When they have loved with woman's love,
Or tried what manhood tries.

O brothers, sisters, she who first
Received your mother's kiss,
Misses among you here to-day
What neither of you miss:
Your hearts go out, as hearts can go,
Unto her widowed heart,
And hers comes nearer yours and finds
The love that hath no art.

We know your thoughts half-tearful turn
To the one vacant chair;
If Love could make the circle full,
That were not empty there.
But Faith, O dear, dear friends, can fill
What seemeth else unfilled: —
God hath not blessed you all to-day
To leave his soul unthrilled.

For fifty years these two have been
Each to the other light;

VERSES

Aye, fifty years of love and life
 Without a flaw or blight!
 O golden day, go slowly down,
 O thrifty years, come on
 And bring their children, here or there,
 Their golden wedding dawn.

VERSES

*Read at the hundredth birthday reception of Mrs.
 Mary H. Gilbert, September 8, 1886, Gloucester,
 Mass.*

THIS mansion of a woman's life
 Twice fifty Junes have dreamed upon;
 A hundred years! A hundred *rooms*
 From room to room go opening on —

Go opening on from dark to bright.
 Through the long vista we behold
 Life's gleaming pictures lose their gleam;
 The hearth-light, laughing, fling its gold.

A hundredth time September comes,
 A yearly guest who dearer grows;
 Still sits the matron here serene,
 Still on her cheek the life-light glows.

The merry hostess still in state
Here in her happy hundredth room!
Shut out the shadow from the shine,
Shut in the odor and the bloom!

Shut out the tumult of the street!
Breathe the dear breath of song and psalm;
For us the fortune of the sea,
For her the harbor and the calm.

September winds blow sweet and cool!
September skies be clear and blue
O'er one on whom diviner airs
Sweep down from Heaven's diviner hue!

Not distant lies that other shore,
Nor faintly shine the golden sands,
Wherefrom the Father's house is seen —
Our Father's house not made with hands.

LINES READ AT THE "PROCTER GATHERING"

NEW ENGLAND hath uncertain skies;
Her hills are hard and gray;
But on their harps of oak the winds
Unwritten anthems play.

And woman is as true to us,
And childhood as divine,
And home as sacred here as where
The summers endless shine.

Her strength is not in titled men,
Far less in mines of gold, —
Count but her ever-coming keels,
You leave the best untold;
Her wealth is love of home, a coin
Too pure to ring or weigh;
Her hope the simple pride that prompts
This gathering to-day.

A hundred harvest scythes have swung
Along their dewy rows,
And Summer's golden poetry
Hath followed Winter's prose,
Since two stood in the altar-light, —
We seem to see them now, —
Her hand in his, two hearts in one,
Vowing the olden vow.

Upon the hearth the fire sang
Of things the oak had heard,
It mimicked bygone revelry
Of woodland brook and bird;
And all the pine had hoarded long
Of summer-sweet perfume,

The fire reluctant loosed
To fill the bridal-room.

They built their home thereafter here
Beside the singing sea,
Where songs to-day, perhaps, are sung
Unheard by you and me;
They held their hearts as hearts are held,
Through gladness and through woe, —
For love hath many ways to keep
What she hath set aglow.

His busy hand and brain kept time
To music of the mill,
And laden vessels went and came
To speed his spoken will.
Her happy hand and voice attuned
The lyric of her wheel, —
Ay, down the avenue of years
We hear its murmur steal.

The blood that reddened in her cheek,
You feel it in your veins;
The light that lit their meeting eyes
Yet gladdens and enchains;
And so their dreams are dreamed again,
The same sweet tale is told, —
When young ears lean to favored lips,
What if the tale be old?

PROCTER GATHERING

Through set and shine, through gleam
and gloom,

The circling months went by, —
December with its muffled feet,
April with tearful eye;
Like us they kept some June at heart,
Some faded, broken spray,
Or hidden wealth of baby-hair,
To cheer the later gray.

The greater number of their kin
We look upon as dead, —
Gone as November's fallen leaves,
Or June's sweet blossoms shed;
But they are here perhaps, they fill
Each seeming vacant chair;
To bless, with hands and lips unseen,
The feast they cannot share.

Few human gatherings are full,
Forecast whatever day, —
No festival is perfect here,
Ordain it as we may;
Some now are absent on the land,
And some are on the sea;
O wind and sky, be fair to them
As wind and sky can be!

THE PARTING WORD

39

We meet, an undivided throng;
We, who have days in store,
And they whose feet are meted not
By any shade or shore;
We meet with undivided hearts,
With joy and dance and song, —
The laughter of their wedding-day
Let our lips prolong.

Bring in the viol that he played,
Rekindle with the bow
The mirth and music they began
A hundred years ago;
Fill up the heart's red cup and drink
To all that gladdens home,
And pledge to Honor and Good Name
The hundred years to come.

THE PARTING WORD

YOUR words are said, your songs are sung,
The lights grow dim and dimmer,
The feast full high and sweet is done,
And joy is but a glimmer.
One word and then we turn to leave
The banquet scene forsaken,
Like one, who, dreaming of the day
Doth in the dark awaken.

THE PARTING WORD

And now you bid me take the harp,
And trust my hapful fingers,
To try if some one tune, perchance,
Of all its magic lingers, —
Some tune to bring you back again
The past in all its glory, —
The sunny look, the winning word,
The undertone of story.

Alas! that such a task should fall
To such a hand as mine is,
While in your hearts you hold unsung
The song that auld lang syne is.
But he who hath a song sometimes,
Though diffident with others,
May sing it by the hearth, before
An audience of brothers.

Delay the word, let sadness wait,
Renew the light and laughter,
Fill high the cup we came to drink,
Nor fear the morning after.
Ay, Life hath sunny days and long,
But none too warm and tender;
Then fill the picture of to-day
Sweet with a sunset splendor.

By many paths our feet have come,
O'er river, sea, and prairie,

Hope's landmark glowing all the way
With gleams that never vary.
By winding ways our feet will go
Back to our hearth-side pleasures,
To broader duties, fuller lives,
And love-illuminated treasures.

Behind yon chairs I seem to see
Sweet forms with faces hidden;
All hail! we know not who are 'mong
These guests who come unbidden, —
Unbidden, no, no, no, they came
Another way than ours,
And where we saw the wayside sand,
They gathered wayside flowers.

The passing hour is ripe, so may
All farewell moments find you, —
Life's lifted cup in happy hands,
With sainted ones to mind you.
Now brothers, sisters, of one name,
God bless the bread we've broken,
And light our now dividing paths, —
Farewell, — it must be spoken.

Farewell, — the word is to your hearts
A sweet vibration bringing,
While to your thoughts the summer sea
A softer song is singing.

DAY UNTO DAY

Farewell! upon our inner eye
 What sudden scenes are stealing!
 Farewell! upon our inner ear
 What hidden bells are pealing!

DAY UNTO DAY

Gloucester (including Rockport), Cape Ann, Massachusetts. 1642-1892.

Let statue, picture, park, and hall,
 Ballad, flag, and festival,
 The past restore, the day adorn,
 And make to-morrow a new morn.

Emerson.

There was an island . . . and sweet single roses.

Higginson's Journal, 1629.

When ships were divers leagues distant and had not made land,
 so fragrant and odoriferous was the land to the mariners, that they
 knew they were not far from the shore.

Scottow's Narrative.

I

"We need a town," the Ages said,
 "Beyond the willing sea,
 Wherein to grow in other air
 Our infant, liberty.

"Though sorrow visit there the child,
 Though care may seek her door,
 Who hears her footfall once will hear
 And love it evermore.

"A homespun town we need," they said,
 "With honor in the web,
And men who dare to build and sail,
 Let fortune flow or ebb.

"Divide your kingdoms where you may,
 Or hold the hills in fee,
But lay no lien on the deep,
 For all men own the sea."

II

O mariners, who sail in quest,
 Untroubled there, the main,
The deep-blue deep is all your own, —
 What more is there to gain?

What more is there to win, O ship?
 Ne'er let a chance persuade!
Thou'rt sailing by a haven here
 As fine as God hath made.

Why sail this harbor by? Come in!
 Some reef may be thy woe;
For thee the land hath waited long,
 For thee the roses blow.

The island-roses, captain bold,
 Invite thee and thy crew;

Their perfume is as sweet as if
They drank of England's dew.

In vain, O valiant Captain Smith,
Thy labors we invite:
Now other hands will build the town
And its proud records write.

III

Old England had grown roses long
As she had grown her men:
Ah! where were sweeter roses? Where
Was manhood braver? When?

Old England gave her gravest, best, —
Who else could rear the New?
The land was not a land forlorn
That grew the men she grew.

IV

See Conant and his comrades build
On this fair headland green!
Undoing all their hands have done,
Alas! they leave the scene.

They leave the wilderness as wild
As ever wildness were:

Who now will build the town to stay
And wear their heart for her?

v

"Sweet single roses," blow your breath
Beyond the harbor-line!
For men are sailing on a quest
With thoughts of home and kine.

With thoughts of hearth and kine they come
And cast their anchor down:
These are the men with hope in hand
To build your needed town.

Lured by a rose's breath, are these
The men to hew and fell?
What armor of the soul they have
To ward a witch's spell?

They were the men to plant a town
On this reluctant soil;
The common weal was in their work
As light is in the oil.

How soon they see in ev'ry oak
The promise of a sill!
Their hearth-light in the pine they see, —
These men of sight and will.

In many a boulder, too, they seek
The coming doorstep stone;
How sweet to hew when what is hewn
Becomes at once one's own!

And yet they thought it sweeter far
To hear some brother's call,
Then answer it and feel within, —
One's own is not one's all.

Saw they not more than hearth and sill
They had no sight, alas! —
The Lord they saw, as men should see, —
For men are more than grass.

And so they builded to the Lord:
They knew when all is known,
Or give or keep, or sow or sing,
One's all is not one's own.

VI

O single roses, sweet, that lured
These sailing men to land, —
These men with sight and will to see,
With hope in either hand, —

We thank thee for the men who threw
Their idle anchor down,

Who felt thee as a breath of home,
Whose love begat our town.

VII

O fields of by-gone battle-days,
Where hold you now her sons? —
“T was here the maddest charge was made
That ever silenced guns:

“The day was deathful here, O God!
The turf is sweet and dear:
Cape Ann, the tide of battle turned,
Thy fallen sons lie here.”

O favored field, complete thy tale!
Was that day lost or won?
“No day was ever lost by him
Who fell with duty done.”

O famous field, bethink once more!
Was the day won or lost?
“The doubtful day is never won
By those who count the cost?”

Hear, hear, old Cape, from fields renowned
Comes home the proud reply, —
“Thy sons make sweet the turf they trod,
And lustrous where they lie.”

VIII

Men know thy hidden grief, O Cape,
Whose losses leave no scar:
Thy looked-for sons who come no more,
By the sea ennobled are.

IX

Ah! truant sons and daughters, now,
What shall your province be?
A thousand hearts are here as one, —
Keep you the happy key!

For you the lanes are all in bloom
To lead where once they led;
You seek no by-way here alone, —
To-day there are no dead.

Float down the golden harbor-tide
Within the sunset glow!
The snowy squadrons cloud the bay, —
For you their pennons flow.

Dream over all your dreams! Beyond
Their hills of lavender
Are sails that never nearer come, —
The ships that ever were, —

The dream-bound ships that seem to wait
For something from the hills;
The lucky wind, that knows their need,
To-day their coming wills.

O seaport, look! thy craft are not
The waiting wealth of dreams,
For flight is in their supple sails
And sinew in their beams.

X

O city dear, thy hammers find
A purpose in the stone:
Thy weal and woe are in the sea, —
The sea, that mocks thy moan.

Come woe or weal, thy women mate
Thy well-rewarded men:
Now, where is woman dearer? Where
Was manhood braver? When?

XI

O brothers, sisters, have we built
As He would have us build?
Hath heart or hand been loth to turn
From heart or hand unfilled?

Our fathers builded in their day
Not for the day alone;
Their common love the common weal,
Day unto day hath shown.

XII

“O sons of mine, thy Cape hath been
For centuries my stay;
Go, serve her well and love her well,” —
Let Massachusetts say!

Aye, Massachusetts, mother dear,
We will be all we may; —
God keep thee, rare old COMMONWEALTH,
From border-line to bay!

AUGUST 24, 1892.

TRANSLATIONS

THE ANSWER

From the German of Geibel

THOU askest me, my maiden,
Why sing I sorrow-laden
My song? — thou bid'st me say.
Delay my springtime rifled,
I played with love and trifled, —
I dreamed my youth away.

The beaker came and tempted,
It went from me unemptied,
I let the chance go by;
Pomegranates, grapes, invited
And beckoned me, delighted,
I gathered them? not I.

A BOHEMIAN MELODY

AE! know I not, indeed,
Why thou art drawn to me;

BOHEMIAN MELODIES

Ah! know I not, indeed,
Why I am loved by thee!

I have no dower fine,
Nor am I fair to see;
Ah! know I not, indeed,
Why thou lovest me!

Thine eyes of blessed blue,
They revel in their glee;
Thine eyes of blessed blue
Are ever blessing me;

Thine eyes of blessed blue
And thy busy hands too, —
They tell a thousand times,
Why I love you!

BOHEMIAN MELODIES

I

WINDS are blowing, blowing sweetly;
To the river runs the brook;
Maiden with the blue eyes, lovely,
From your little window look.

Nay, nay, look not from the window;
Rather meet me at the door;
And for every kiss you offer,
I will give you three or four.

II

Say to me, my little star,
Is it bright or sad you are?

Art thou troubled, then be clear,
Maiden, O, bethink thee, dear.
"Aye, aye, now bethink I me;
Sweet, forever love I thee."

BRIDGES

From the German of Geibel

SONGS are bridges golden,
Golden, dear, to me,
Where my love may wander,
Happy child, to thee.

Pinions in my dreams, dear,
Sad or gay and light,
To thy heart will bear me,
Bear me every night!

THE DREAM

THE DREAM

From the German of Uhland

BUT yesterday a-dreaming
I lay upon a steep
That ran along the seaside;
I looked along the lea-side
And out upon the deep.

A little boat was lying
Beside the shore below;
The boatman looked and waited
As he were one belated,
And gayly flags did blow.

Now from the far-off mountain
A merry train drew near,
Garlands on garlands bearing
And other garlands wearing —
Like angels they appear.

Before the glad procession
The children skip and play,
Their elders beakers swinging,
With dancing and with singing
They fill the happy way.

They cry unto the boatman:

“Delights and joys are we
Who far away would find us,
The earth, the earth behind us —
Wilt take us o’er the sea?”

Replied the boatman: “Enter.”

They hurriedly embark.
He spake: “My loved ones, mind ye,
Are any left behind ye,
On hill or dale? Now hark.”

“No, we are all,” they answer.

“Up sail, up sail, and start!”
From earth — the land-breeze follows —
I see, like homeward swallows,
Delight and joy depart.

THE FLOWER OF SUBMISSION

From the German of Eichendorf

I’m a flower in a garden
Waiting, waiting quietly
For the moment and the manner
When and how Thou’lt come to me.

Comest Thou a gleam of sunshine
Thou wilt fill me with delight,
To Thy bosom I'll unfold me
And I'll keep Thy glances bright.

Comest Thou as dew or raindrop,
Blessing as Thou can'st but bless,
Love's own chalice shall contain Thee,
And shall never find Thee less.

And if Thou should'st o'er me hover
In the wind I would incline,
Lowly, lovingly, surrender,
Saying, "I am only Thine."

I'm a flower in a garden
Waiting, waiting quietly
For the moment and the manner
When and how Thou'lt come to me.

IN A GARDEN

YONDER in a queen's court-garden
Blooms a little rosebud rare;
Two nights long the dew hath sprinkled,
Sprinkled little rosebud there.

Yonder in a queen's court-garden
By the little rosebud rare,
Night long wept my little darling —
Wept my true-love — sweet and fair.

Yonder in a queen's court-garden
Sigh'd we over bygone bliss;
By the little blooming rosebud
Kiss'd we, ah! the parting kiss.

IN AUTUMN

From the German of Geibel

OH! were it only cheeks that lose
Their color with the years!
But ah! it makes me sad to think
How heart-bloom disappears, —

How vanishes the fame of youth,
Whose glance in sorrow sets; —
The breast that once was hot with love,
How it hath loved forgets.

And though with wit and banter, too,
The daring lip o'erflows,
'T is only a dissembling green
That in the grave-grass grows.

THE LYING BIRD

Night comes and sorrow comes with night,
But fitful gleams awake;
Our hearts that long in vain for tears
May long until they break.

Why are we weary and so poor,
Who knows? we feel but this,
Bloom after bloom the heart lets fall,
A dream is every bliss.

THE LYING BIRD

WHY prates the little bird there
Upon the bough above?
"That one who loves a maiden
Grows pale for very love."

Now, little bird, thou liest —
Thy talk is full of lies;
For look, I love a maiden,
And crimson to the eyes.

Wait, bird, and while thou liest,
I'll softly creep around, —
I'll draw my truest arrow
And shoot thee to the ground.

MIST

O GLOOMY mist, conceal from me
The valley and the stream, —
The mountain and its hunting wood
And every sunny gleam.

O take away in thy gray night,
In length and breadth, the earth;
And take away withal the past
That gives my sorrow birth!

A MORAVIAN MELODY

WHAT is that a-sighing?
Hark! what can it be?
Is it bells a-ringing —
Or the maple tree?

'T is n't bells a-ringing,
Nor the maple leaves;
'T is a lover going,
And a maiden grieves.

THE OCEAN OF HOPE

From the German of Rückert

THOUGH hope upon hope is rent in twain,
The heart hopes over and over again;
As wave upon wave breaks, breaks on the shore, —
But the sea it hath more, and more, and more.

For the wave to rise and the wave to fall
Is the life of the sea, — its all in all;
And the hopes of the heart from day to day
Are only the waves of the heart at play.

As the foam of the sea goes towards the skies,
So ever the dreams of the heart arise;
And e'en as a dream from a dream evolves,
So the spray of the sea into spray resolves.

ONE OUT OF MANY

OH kiss me not with a hundred kisses,
I pray thee, I pray thee: —
Make one kiss out of a hundred kisses,
Then kiss me, oh! kiss me!

ON THE LAKE

From Goethe

I DRAW fresh nutriment, new blood,
From out the open air;
How lovely nature is and good
Who holds me to her bosom fair!

The waves they rock our little boat
To the oars' time along;
And mountains meet us where we float
Their heads the clouds among.

Eyes, mine eyes, why are ye drooping?
Golden dreams again come trooping;
Golden as thou art, away!
Love and Life are here to-day.

The stars, a thousand thousand,
Upon the waves are blinking,
And all the rounded offing
The tender mist is drinking.

The morning wind is winging
About the shadowed bay,
And in the lake be-mirrored,
The rip'ning fruit doth play.

REARED IN A ROOM

ROSEBUD, rosebud, rare and red,
 Blooming in the window here,
Looking out upon the sea,
 With no other rosebud near —

Rosebud, rosebud, red and rare,
 How doth life appear to thee?
Sunshine on the hearth within,
 And without the winter sea.

Rosebud, rosebud, rare and red,
 With no sister bud to bloom,
All thy glory thou hast won
 From the summer in my room.

Rosebud, rosebud, red and rare,
 All the summer thou hast seen,
Love hath made for two or three,
 Other summers there have been;

Rosebud, rosebud, rare and red,
 Summers that have come and gone,
When the roses filled the night,
 And a rose was in the dawn.

Rosebud, rosebud, red and rare,
 'T is a loss to thee, I know,
 Never birds of June to hear,
 Nor to feel its breezes blow.

Rosebud, rosebud, rare and red,
 Am I like thee? in a word,
 Are there fuller skies than mine?
 Sweeter songs than I have heard?

"Rosebud, rosebud, red and rare,"
 Something whispers thee, no doubt;
 "There are fairer rooms within,
 There are finer seas without."

Rosebud, rosebud, rare and red,
 Thou dost answer, seemingly:
 "I will be a rose no less
 For the sake of two or three."

Rosebud, rosebud, red and rare,
 Other roses, too, have fed
 From the love-light in my room,
 In my room, and they are dead.

Rosebud, rosebud, rare and red,
 Thou dost fill my soul with doubt,
 When I see thee growing there
 And the winter white without.

Rosebud, rosebud, red and rare,
What if thou art not a rose?
But a being in that guise
Winning light and bloom from those,

Rosebud, rosebud, rare and red,
Those who in my life are more
Than the world of roses reared
Since the stake of Zillah bore.

Rosebud, rosebud, red and rare,
All my doubt of thee is gone;
Thou art sweet as baby lips
That a smile hath crept upon.

Rosebud, rosebud, rare and red,
Thou wilt bloom as one before;
Then the babe will creep and eat
Fallen roseleaves from the floor.

Rosebud, rosebud, red and rare,
Reappearing at the pane,
In her breath and on her cheek
Thou wilt breathe and bloom again.

ROSE AND THORN

From the German of Rückert

As long ago in the April wind,
With thee, my child, a wreath I twined,
 How did I divide it? Say!
The thorn for me
And the rose for thee, —
I divided it fatherly.

And as thou, my child, left me behind,
And fled away in the winter wind, —
 How hast thou divided? Say!
The rose for thee
And the thorn for me, —
Thou dividedst undaughterly.

As now again in the springtime here,
For thee my wreath I twine, my dear, —
 How shall I divide it? Say!
The thorn for me
And the rose for thee, —
So we will share eternally.

A SLAVONIC MELODY

If my little maid to-night
Comes across the heather,
It will mean the sun and moon
Coming up together.

Ah! my little maiden dear
Comes not o'er the heather;
Silver moon and golden sun,
Come not now together.

SPRING

From the German of Lenau

THE trees are all blooming,
The little birds sing;
And out in the meadow
The grasses up-spring.

It grieves me while treading
The earth as I do,
To think I endanger
Her garment so new.

TO ONE AT A DISTANCE

67

Ah! she though is careless
If opening bloom
Or song of the springtime
Doth veil me in gloom.

TO ONE AT A DISTANCE

HERE I pluck a rosebud sweet,
On my journey going,
Which I fain would bring to thee,
Maiden mine, while blowing.

Ah! the barrier of miles —
'T is too many thither;
Roses in a hurry bloom,
And my rose would wither.

Love from love should never go,
Life to dullness dooming,
Farther than a rose in hand
Can be carried blooming;

Farther than the nightingale
Brings her building grasses;
Farther than her sweetest song
In an echo passes.

TO THE ABSENT

From the Swedish of Tegner

How happy the days were! Where, Nanna, art
thou?

And where is the gladness I'm longing for now?
A lovely companion in life had I then,
Whom sadly and lonesome I pine for again.

I enter thy chamber; how empty and lone!
A temple forsaken, a goddess's own!
There 's not a dear place where thy footsteps have
been
But wakens remembrance so happy and keen.

I go to thy mirror and seek for thee there;
But thee it forgets and thine image so fair.
And now for thy picture to soothe me I come;
It hears not a word that I say, and is dumb.

A pilgrim I wander and seek but for thee;
I sit on the stone where thou satest with me.
I sit and I listen and listen; but all
That I hear is the wind and the brook in its fall.

I go to thy garden and fondle the flowers
That harbored thy fancies in earlier hours;

They lean in their sorrow, those delicate blooms,
And the longing I suffer their beauty consumes.

I walk in the woods. Like a friend is each tree,
Where my name in the bark was once lettered by
thee.
I take the light boat and row off to thine isle,
And the wind and the wave whisper "Nanna" the
while.

Come heart to my heart, 't is thy birthday to-day!
My life joy lies sealed in a letter away;
But the seal shall be broken in less than a year,
And the bride will be wife to me happy and dear!

TO THE WIND

I WANDER to another land;
Once more I look behind to see
The last fond beckon of her hand,
To hear her farewell word to me.

She calls to me that kindly word,
To cheer me through my troubled stay,
But not the lightest tone is heard —
The wind hath carried it away.

'T is not enough that I must break
 Away from joy and say farewell;
But thou, rude, bitter wind must make
 Her parting word inaudible.

IN THE SEA

IN THE SEA

THE salt wind blows upon my cheek,
As it blew a year ago,
When twenty boats were crushed among
The rocks of Norman's Woe.
'T was dark then; 't is light now,
And the sails are leaning low.

In dreams, I pull the seaweed o'er,
And find a face not his,
And hope another tide will be
More pitying than this:
The wind turns, the tide turns, —
They take what hope there is.

My life goes on as thine would go,
With all its sweetness spilled;
My God, why should one heart of two
Beat on, when one is stilled?
Through heart-wreck, or home-wreck,
Thy happy sparrows build.

BLOWN OFF

Though boats go down, men build anew,
 Whatever winds may blow;
If blight be in the wheat one year,
 We trust again and sow,
Though grief comes, and changes
 The sunshine into snow.

Some have their dead, where, sweet and soon,
 The summers bloom and go;
The sea withholds my dead, — I walk
 The bar when tides are low,
And wonder the grave-grass
 Can have the heart to grow!

Flow on, O unconsenting sea,
 And keep my dead below;
Though night — O utter night! — my soul,
 Delude thee long, I know,
Or Life comes or Death comes,
 God leads the eternal flow.

BLOWN OFF

I SEE my favored sisters ride,
 Clasped in the lucent harbor tide.
The yachts, our lilies of the sea,
 Fold their white petals dreamily.

The pilot watches from the hill
For all, the wind doth have its will.

My owner in the secret mart
Persuades — a master of the art —
Parcels my cargo, hidden here:
No largess of the tropic year,
No little worlds-of-goodness grapes
Plucked from the laps of dimpled capes,
Nor wines to molten light akin
With sleeping goblins leashed therein,
But living chattels dull as death,
A perishable lot, a breath
The difference 'twixt gain and loss
That makes the captain dream and toss;
Oh, buyers, vain your bids will be,
For I, the ship, am blown to sea.

I hear the sailors tell their tales
Of idle ships and folded sails
And fairer lands that leeward lie,
Where human dream and effort die;
Of seas that print the meanest thing,
Beyond the sea's imagining,
Where ships are never overdue,
Nor midnight summons stir the crew;
Where all the bays are siren-isled,
And care and chance are dream-beguiled.

All this to wile the time, for we
Are blown to sea, blown out to sea.

And still they hold me with their tales
Of happy pennons over sails
Dipped in a crystal wine of dew
To keep their lustre ever new,
As 't were to hold their valor, too;
Of tarry hands upon the helm,
The single deck a prouder realm
Than ever monarch battled for
In the old days of war on war.
But I would rather wear to-day
My wind-worn pennon, grave and gray,
Than that of admiral or king,
In finer fabric glorying
To lift the fighter out of fear.
But I would rather touch my pier,
Have school-boys climbing shrouds and stays
To learn the wonders of my ways,
The happy sweethearts coming down
To kiss my sailors salt and brown,
Than be the favored craft that smiles
Allegiance to enchanted isles
Where need is hinted nevermore
Of sudden sail or eager oar.
But ah! the choice is not for me,
Blown out to sea and out to sea.

The tales are told, the lips are still,
The pilot lies beneath the hill.
Along the way I beat and beat;
The ropes have rotted from the cleat,
My sails to shadows now have grown,
E'en hope hath from the anchor flown.
The hand upon my helm is dead,
The winds that wasted it have fled.
The chart is all the while outspread,
But all its currents, shoals, and capes
Can never warn the ebon shapes
That all about the capstan sit,
On cable tier or windlass bit.

A hundred harvests now have grown
Since from the harbor I was blown;
The books are shut that knew my name,
Forgot the owner and his shame;
Men's minds are full of other ships;
My name is never on their lips,
Nor woman's hope doth summon me,
An outcast thing of misery
Blown out to sea, blown out to sea.

COAST-WISE

RUNNING the chances of shoal and of siren,
Glare o' the city and glimmer of town,

Mariners we with our hearts in the offing,
Sailing the bay up and sailing it down.
Coast-wise and coast-wise, the harbor-lights greet,
Down o' the thistle and glimpses of wheat.

Mariners gray in the service of Traffic,
Often to venture and rarely to win;
Ever instead of the coveted sea-room
Something to weather the tide setting in.
Coast-wise and coast-wise, the luck o' the lee,
And the breath o' the woodland; but servitors we.

Not for our keel are the seas we would enter;
Not for our deck their illumining spray;
Not for our sails are the touch o' their sunsets.
Oh! for our shallops the wings o' the day!
Coast-wise and coast-wise, the beacon lights clear,
Only to sail the same provinces near!

Nightly in dreams do the sirens delude us,
Blowing us winds that by daylight are gone;
Ever away in the offing are looming,
Continents pink with continual dawn.
Coast-wise and coast-wise, the inlets of song
And the seas, to the singers to whom they belong.

THE FISHERMEN

I

THREE hardy young toilers over a net
Are slipping the fish out, one by one;
Unheeded comes the sweet breath of the land,
And the silent touch of the sun.
Mad winds grow madder to-night, and shake
With a tempest their boat on the sea,
You cannot awake from their happy dreams
These happier fishers, three.

II

Three idle old fishermen sit to-day
On a bench beneath the storehouse eaves;
One tells of a bridal, and one of a wreck —
One says, "How the east wind grieves!"
Ah! tenderly tidings go out
To the boats that have hidden their wings,
And a tenderer echo comes back
In the songs that the fisher-boy sings.
For the fishermen, idle and old,
Have told their last grief in the sun,
And other hands will quietly do
The little theirs left undone.

III

Three briery graves above a beach
Allure the pitying kiss of the morn;
For the dead grass there doth miss the green
That is caught by the conscious corn.
Do their tenants answer the undertones
Of the sea there, questioning night and day?
Do they take any thought for the laden nets,
Or the buffeting boats in the bay?

MISLED

SWEET Life, at morn thou dreamest
That sunlit sail at sea
Is sailing to thy harbor,
For love, for love of thee.

Dear Life, at eve thou fearest
That sunlit sail at sea
Is thy far youth there hailing,
"Good-bye, good-bye" to thee.

A NIGHT'S PERIL

TAKE the tiller, laddie, meet her,
Keep her steady as we go,

If we make the light we're lucky,
With the air so thick o' snow.

Oh! your mother's wont to waiting
When a wind comes up like this —
But a sweetheart, steady, laddie,
When a boat has gone amiss —

I have seen a maiden wither
Like a rosebud in the heat,
When the lad she looked for, . . . laddie,
God Almighty, keep your feet!

Let me take the tiller, Ronald,
You have not my hold, my son;
Ha! my boat she keeps her heart up,
She and I are almost one.

We have weathered all we tried to,
But the winds have shook us some;
We are old and sea-worn, maybe,
And belike our time has come!

But your mother — boy, a hand here!
Lord, was that Salvages roar?
There's a light — the anchor, laddie,
Here's the little cove once more!

ONE PORT ALONE

ON THE BRINK

RENEW your travail, ocean waves!
The winds are cruel, they insist;
They break your hearts along the reef,
And leave you when they list:
You sink into the sea again,
I wonder does it still your pain!

My heart is in a tempest, too,
Without an offing or a lee;
A moment and itself could still
Its tumult in the sea:
I wonder, though, let all be weighed —
I wonder would its pain be stayed!

ONE PORT ALONE

O LORD, to let Thy darkness down
Between a heart and heart!
To let Thy favor come so near
And promise, then depart!

It seems our hope is never free
From harrowing eclipse;
What bitter chances envy us
The cup before our lips!

THE RESTLESS

81

There seem so many ways to lose,
So very few to keep;
We wonder how we dare to sow,
Or sowing rise to reap.

The sea-worn weary mariner,
To whom all ports are known,
Goes by them all to make but one,
For that one is his own.

Now like the mariner, O Lord,
We pass all havens by,
All but the haven of Thy love;
Thou knowest, Father, why?

THE RESTLESS

A SEA-BORN captain came,
A constant winter in his beard;
None knew what skies had harbored him,
What shoals his heart had cleared.

He looked a very king;
You might have set him on a throne,
And king to king would nod and swear,
"He is bone of our bone."

"I need a ship," he said;
"Not a crank jade to start and cringe,
Though tempests unreluctant strike,
And the quick lightnings singe; —

A clipper, class A 1;
Not for your tricky cotton bales,
But one to make my purpose hers,
With seldom idle sails."

The eager shipwrights eyed
A mighty oak, the sea-mark there,
And felled it; with unuttered fear,
They laid its gray heart bare.

One withered bough had borne
A woman; hoary elders said
Her art had turned to seeming stone
Their sacramental bread.

The gaunt oak shrank beneath
The snap of ever-angry steel;
In every thought the witch's curse,
They hewed a lusty keel.

And often while they built,
A phantom navy held the coast;
It stayed the labor-prompted song,
The master's ready boast.

And in an under breath
'T was said that other workmen wrought
At night, beneath the captain's eye,
With clearer will and thought.

As one before a loom,
Of every touch secure and proud,
Sees not the shadow, Fate, who weaves
Or wedding-robe or shroud;

So the chief builder stood
Before his handiwork; he knew
'T is ill when hidden hammers fall
And silent axes hew.

The troubled builder built,
The captain queried left and right;
The ship, apparelled now, bird-like,
Shook in her dreams of flight.

To meet the sea's desire,
She fled one wild November day,
And after her the spectral fleet
Ran down the shuddering bay.

Each year the four winds brought
A fisherman from Labrador,
A merchantman from tropic seas,
Or sullen man-of-war.

And each sea-record said: —

“A sail went flying by to-night,
With not a breath of wind, and left
A wake of branching light.

“We caught the hurried words,
‘Report the Restless at St. Ann,
Report the Restless anywhere,’
The final order ran.”

Men slowly came to know
The doom her tired pennons trailed,
While second childhood crooned this curse,
Upon the oak entailed: —

“Who builds it in a ship
May only look for her return
When tides refuse to go and come,
And stars forget to burn.

“Though she may long for land,
And grope for it with weary keel,
No harbor-light shall comfort her,
With my will at the wheel.”

A SAILOR'S DITTY

Ho! the wind is coming up and the wind is blowing
by,
And the sky is clear of cloud as a loving woman's
eye,
An' a heave-ho, my hearty!

There is land upon the lee an' a light upon the
land,
An' a kettle all a-singin' an' the welcome of a hand,
An' a heave-ho, my hearty!

Ho! the sea is full of light as the ship is full of
joy,
We can toss the anchor over as a baby would a toy,
An' a heave-ho, my hearty!

Men, they parcel out the land into little acre lots;
For an inch of it they quarrel then, till one or other
rots,
An' a heave-ho, my hearty!

But the sea is any sailor's who has under him a
keel,
An' a king he is upon it when his hand is on the
wheel,
An' a heave-ho, my hearty!

Ho! the land is well enough for the women an' the
sheep,
An' to keep the keels a-growing till they hanker for
the deep,
An' a heave-ho, my hearty!

But for men of sight and sinew there 's nothing like
the sea,
An' the little woman thinks it who is looking now
for me,
An' a farewell, my hearty!

THE SKIPPER HERMIT

FOR thirty year, come herrin'-time,
Through many kind o' weather,
The Wren an' me have come an' gone,
An' held our own together.
Do' know as she 's as good as new,
Do' know as I am, nuther;
But she is truer 'n kit' an' kin,
Or any but a mother.

They 're at me now to stay ashore;
But while we 've hand an' tiller,
She 'll stick to me an' I to her, —
To leave the Wren would kill her.

My feet have worn the deck; ye see
How watches leave their traces,
An' write on oak an' pine as plain
As winters on our faces!

But arter all is said an' done,
There 's somethin' sort o' human
About a boat that takes at last
The place of child and woman;
An' yet when I have seen some things —
Their mothers let me toss 'em —
My boat, she seemed a barnacle
'Longside a bran new blossom.

Sometimes to me the breeze off-shore
Comes out upon the water,
As if it left the grave of her —
No wife to me, nor daughter.
Lor'! if I knowed where green or no
The turf is sweet above her,
I'd buy a bit o' ground there, — wide
As a gull's wings would cover.

We know the tricks of wind an' tide
That mean an' make disaster,
An' balk 'em, too — the Wren an' me —
Off on the Ol' Man's Pastur'.
Day out an' in, the blackfish there
Go wabblin' out an' under,

An' nights we watch the coasters creep
From light to light in yonder.

An' then ag'in we lay an' lay
Off Wonson's Cove, or Oakes's —
None go by our compass-light,
Nor we by other folks's.
Ashore, the ball-room winders shine
Till weary feet are warnin',
But here an' there 's a sick-room light
That winks away till mornin'.

An' Sundays we go nigher in,
To hear the bells a-ringin', —
I ain't no hand for sermons, you,
But singin' 's allers singin'.
The weathercocks — no two agree —
Like men they arg' an' differ,
While in the cuddy-way I set
An' take my pipe, an' whiff her.

My pipe — eh! p'ison? mighty s-l-o-w;
It makes my dreamin' clearer,
Though what I fill it with now-days
Is growin' dearer 'n' dearer.
I take my comfort when it comes,
Then no lee-lurch can spill it,
An' if my net is empty, Lor'!
Why, how can growlin' fill it?

An' so we jog the hours away,
The gulls they coo an' tattle,
Till on the hills the sundown red
Starts up the drowsin' cattle.
The seiners row their jiggers by,
I pull the slide half over,
An' shet the shore out, an' the smell
Of seaweed sweeter 'n clover.

YOUR BARK AND MINE

PERHAPS you saw my only bark,
As up the inner bay she came,
And, by her phosphorescent wake,
Read and re-read her jeweled name.

How silently she touched the pier,
Nor sorrowed that her voyage was done.
You heard the sea-songs of the crew —
I can repeat them every one.

Cradled in danger she hath been —
Once shaken by a mad typhoon;
Twice pierced by shot from pirate guns
In the dead life of tropic noon.

Yet brings she spices and perfumes,
And curious things from Orient ports —

Wine — ye gods may drink that wine, not I —
These robes were wrought for royal courts.

Aye, she is Fortune's petted child,
Else tales too fabulous are told;
To-day I heard the sailors tell
How spray that touched her turned to gold!

Who places hand upon her helm
May idly wait with wrinkled sails —
Or, if he purpose, tempt her flight
With storm and sea-provoking gales.

One sunset hour her keel may kiss
The classic waves of the Levant;
Another, and her anchor cleaves
These dimpled waters off Nahant.

Seldom her wings are folded quite —
A breath of perfume bids her roam:
Why should I fear? Where'er she sails,
A chime of bells will bring her home.

You have a bark — like, unlike mine:
Last night with precious freight she came;
We stood upon the pier and hailed —
"Th' Imagination?" "Aye, the same."

AN AFTERGLOW

I WATCH the setting sunlight
On vessel, roof, and hill;
Where will it latest linger?
Whose heart the latest fill?

Fain, fain would I go over
The threshold of that heart,
And be a guest within it
To feel the day depart.

The sunlight leaves the harbor,
The masts no more are gold,
And yonder hilltop cottage
Looks mean again and old.

The day has left us, darling,
As other days have not,
The treasures of the morning —
A love-abiding lot.

The light hath left our window,
But look away a-sea:
A single sail is golden
With sunset, one of three.

AN AFTERGLOW

It is the day there kissing
Again to us "good-bye."
O sailor-boy and sailor,
With you the day doth die.

O sailor-boy and sailor,
But for that sudden gleam
You would have seemed no dearer
Than other sailors seem;

But since the day hath singled
Your sail from all at sea
I long to tell you, brothers,
What the day hath been to me.

O sailor-boy, O sailor,
Make all the sail you may,
And bring again the day back
To be again a day.

You cannot bring the day back,
Whatever light you bring,
But other days will kiss you
While other singers sing.

AFTER ALL

O SHIPS that in Life's offing fail
To win the port with eager sail,
Baffled and beaten, nothing gained
Though every spar is overstrained;
While there are fibres of the mast
That are not conscious of the blast,
While there are sinews of the sail
That seem the truer for the gale,
Keep to the helm, not doubting yet, —
Though hopes may rise and burn and set, —
The harbor-light shall comfort thee,
Borne on a storm-forsaken sea!

MISCELLANEOUS

"AMONG THE HILLS"

My eyes beheld the favored hills
And saw them as he sung them,
Yea, more, O summer day, they met
The poet dear among them!
Sweet bells of song, I heard them chime,
And touched the hand that swung them.

And though to-day upon those hills
The winter clouds are snowing,
Beneath, within their heart of hearts,
The rills go on, not knowing;
So may our singer's songs flow on,
Whatever winds are blowing.

ARBUTUSING

TEN springs have come and sung and gone,
In shadow half and half aglow,
Since two together sought the shy
Arbutus blooms at Norman's Woe.

I mind me that their fingers met
About a bud of pink and snow;
I wonder are there any now, —
Arbutus blooms at Norman's Woe.

I dine with her; 't is May-day, too;
Her children's cheeks are sweet, I know,
For in their pink and white I see —
Arbutus blooms at Norman's Woe.

Her children; hers and mine, I mean,
For we were wedded Junes ago;
But somehow now we never seek
Arbutus blooms at Norman's Woe.

BEFORE AND AFTER

I

OVER the blue of the river,
Over the barren bay,
Over the empty islands
Cloudland reaches away.

Magical hues on the mountains
Flower and deepen and wane,
And ships come out of their harbors
That never go in again;

And the gates of the looming cities
Open, invite, and close,
While over the walls and through them
Blows every wind that blows.

Cloudland, mutable cloudland,
Lying so fair and low,
Over to thee by daylight
My feet in fancy go;

And I seem to roam thy cities,
Through many a peopled street,
But never to me familiar
Is a face of all I meet;

Never a window lifted,
Never a laugh to cheer,
Never a hand to beckon,
Never a song I hear.

II

Baby and I in the garden
Gathered the sweets of May;
Out of the cloudland something
Beckoned the boy away.

III

Cloudland, magical cloudland,
Lying so near and low,
Over to thee by dream-light
My feet unguided go;

And a little hand doth lead me
Through many a happy street,
And ever to me familiar
Are the faces all and sweet.

Out of the open casements
Many a song I hear,
Every hand doth beckon,
Every sight doth cheer;

City and sea and mountain,
Dear as the day to me,
Are full of a dearer meaning
And a deeper melody.

Over thee, love and labor,
Over the thrall of the day,
Over us, darling, cloudland
Is n't so far away.

A BENISON

THE wind and I, we drowse and dream,
Careless of opportunities;
The mower takes his nooning near, —
Thank God my days are not like his.

BESET

How gently and often I tell them,
Thoughts that beset me and throng,
You are not meet for a poem
And you are too light for a song!

For all, they intrude and they trifle,
Thick as the things in a ray;
They climb their invisible ladders,
Climb and then kick them away.

In vain do I thrust and deny them,
They enter and rummage the house;
They open my skeleton-closet
And cry to his worship, — “Heraus!”

Wife gives me her morning injunctions, —
“Send turnips, potatoes, and greens!”

I give to the grocer an order
For "olives and wine and sardines"!

I make the same mess at the market;
"Remember, love, spinach and tripe!"
"Tripe, tripe," I go singing, "and spare-rib";
But home I send salmon and snipe.

I take my old skiff there and paddle
Or drift on the dreamiest tide,
When out of the sea in a moment
A mermaid comes over the side.

'T is pleasant to read about mermaids,
How deftly they handle the comb;
But here on the thwart right before one,
One's wife knitting tidies at home!

One would n't much fret at the caller,
A summer delicious might pass;
But the knitter alert at the window
Is gauging her opera-glass!

Oh! is there not handy a planet
Where things are all perfect and square,
Where mermaids won't sit on a gunwale
And snicker at glasses that stare?

657565

BEYOND THE BOOK

You see how the fancies beset me;
In vain do I thrust and defy;
They climb their invisible ladders
And — these are the things that I shy.

BEYOND THE BOOK

I READ a soul-sad poem
In a foreign singer's book,
And then above the mantel
Upon his portrait look.

Again I read it over;
The poem fairly cries
Now I have seen the sorrow
Within the poet's eyes.

I read a merry *Liedlein*
Upon another leaf,
Where singing birds are gathered
Like sea-birds on a reef.

Again I pause up-looking,
The poet's lips are dumb,
But full of merry mischief, —
How droll the words become!

O singer sweet, thy *Lieder*
Are alien to my ear;
It may be half their meaning
Eludes me looking here,

But seeing there thy picture
The brooding words take wings;
What now was dim and silent
Breaks into light and sings.

Though tongues and seas withheld us
My heart on thine hath lain,
For sorrow hath one language
And song but one domain.

O picture full of changes,
O book of blue and gold,
You throw a thrall upon me,
You lead me with a hold,

As you would fain interpret
The uninterpreted, —
As you would have me captive
Unto the singer led.

I change with all your changes,
I would not break your hold;
Yet with a thrall inthrall me,
O volume, gold in gold!

102 A BOOK-LOVER TO HIS BOOKS

And as you long to, lead me
Unto the singer dead;
Then leave me to interpret
The uninterpreted.

A BOOK-LOVER TO HIS BOOKS

IN goodly rows ye rise before me,
In sunny silence shelf o'er shelf;
Imagination hides within ye
And Fancy, too, his brother elf.

The thread that holds ye here is slender;
A little while and then 't will break,
Unless some hand shall keep it firmer
A little longer for my sake.

Just for my sake a little longer, —
The thought is sweet, — one may arrange
And keep ye here, "because he loved them,"
From the quick hands of chance and change.

Though long for love, Love may delay it,
Some other haunt will call ye "mine," —
Another owner stand before ye
And drink, as I, your sunny wine.

Now promise me, my precious volumes —
I ask but this when that shall be —
Awake in him, the coming owner,
The love ye yet awake in me.

BREAD AND SONG

We think the spring delaying long,
O'er winter's lingering breath we fret;
From boughs unblooming comes a song,
One heart has faith in May-time yet:
For whom thy song, O birdie sweet?
"I sing for him whose bread I eat."

The minstrel who in olden days
Went wandering from hall to hall
Heard from proud lips warm words of praise,
Felt Beauty's glances warmer thrall.
For whom thy song, O minstrel sweet?
"I sing for him whose bread I eat."

No need of wallet then or scrip
The singer felt, anear the gate;
The songs that over-ran his lip
Were golden keys to palace plate.
For whom, O minstrel, songs so sweet?
"I sing for him whose bread I eat."

BROOK-LIFE

Those days are dead; in many a hall
The shadows after moonlight creep
Along the floor and through the wall,
Unseen by eyes that laugh or weep.
And still those broken walls repeat,
"I sing for him whose bread I eat."

Those echoes, Lord, awake in me
Responses that have slept too long;
My bread hath daily come from Thee,
Too seldom hath returned my song.
Now may my heart in song repeat
"I sing for Him whose bread I eat."

BROOK-LIFE

Two brooks go down the mountain-side
In song and silence love-allied.

And every peril of their way
Provokes a rippling roundelay.

One sees the gentler morning break
On the young lilies in the lake,

And says, "How sweet to lie among
The lilies, there to sing a song!"

The lake she reaches by-and-by,
Sweet listeners about her lie,

But now she has no song to sing;
Her song was born by wandering. —

The other sees the morning break
Upon the sea, on sail and wake,

And says, "How sweet a thing to be
A singer on the listening sea!"

And so the brook slips down and down
From brown to gold, from gold to brown.

Within a furlong of the sea
The sand drinks down the brook a-gee. —

Now who would sing a song at all
Must let it by the wayside fall,

Nor look for any listeners
If his own life it lifts and stirs.

BUILDING

Up and down the tenders go,
Light and laden, young and gray;
Only this their labor brings —
Clay to sand, or sand to clay.

THE CHANCES

Builders shape the growing walls
With a trick of brain and hand,
Something more than this to gain —
Sand to clay, or clay to sand.

So we bring and build, and say,
“Heart, the house is well begun”;
When the Master Builder calls,
“Occupy — thy house is done.”

THE CHANCES

I HEAR an anvil ringing
With blow on blow, and swinging
I seem to see all brawn and bare
The arms that beat the anchor there.

I hear an infant crying,
A mother softly trying
To quiet it with song and word
Till slumber comes, a nestling bird.

To think, O cradled baby,
How years will pass, and maybe
Thy velvet arms, no longer fair,
May swing the hammer in the glare.

THE DAYS

107

To think, O blacksmith tawny,
For all thy blow so brawny,
To-morrow thou perchance may be
A lesser thing than infancy.

THE DAYS

DAYS of spring, days of spring,
Humming and humming;
Bee and bird, bee and bird,
Coming and coming.

Summer days, summer days,
Brighter and brighter;
Full of light, full of light,
Lighter and lighter.

Autumn days, autumn days,
Sweeter and sweeter;
Fruitfuller, fruitfuller,
Fleeter and fleeter.

Winter days, winter days,
Darker and darker;
Iciness, iciness,
Starker and starker.

THE FALLEN CASTLE

Days of mine, days of thine —
River and river,
Flowing on, flowing on,
Ever and ever.

THE FALLEN CASTLE

Go, summon our luckiest leaders,
Give weapons to willing hands;
In call of our wariest castle
An alien army stands.

Our note of alarm and defiance
How little the legion heeds!
No sentinels reckon their minutes —
How careless a captain leads!

All night an occasional drum-beat
Rebuked us over our wine;
His bugles have troubled the morning,
His bayonets lean in line.

Ah! what if he saw that our bastions
Have never a faithful gun!
Or what if he knew that our standard
Hath never a battle won!

Quick, summon our heartiest captains,
Put weapons in any hands;
For here at the gate of the castle
That alien army stands.

Lo! into the castle of Error
A legion carried its light;
The name of it, Truth and Honor,
And the foremost captain, Right.

A thousand like places of ours,
Great leader, remain to be won —
But a thousand like armies, advancing,
Are favored by star and sun.

'T were better to level our ramparts
And beckon the conqueror in;
Then lower forever the standard
That will never a battle win.

A FAR DEMESNE

I DREAMED that Fancy led me
On dewy paths and fed me
With fruit that grew on either side,
That my own touch withal defied.

From height to height I followed,
Or where the dales were hollowed,
And bud and blossom we picked and threw
Into the places where none grew.

Then Fancy said, full-turning
Her eyes upon me burning,
“Now choose a height whereon to build
Thy house, to have it sunset-filled.”

As one whom joy entrances
I turned my longing glances
On one fair summit, lone and far,
That shone, a never-setting star.

She saw the joy that filled me,
The wonder wrapt that thrilled me,
And said as one who had foreseen,
“Yon height is not in my demesne.

“No foot thereon can lead thee;
Climb, fall, and none will heed thee:
That is Imagination’s own;
Who reaches it will tread alone.”

A FEVER FANTASY

(In a grave)

THE babble of life drips in, I feel
The touch of occasional feet.
There 's a violet less o'erhead to-day,
I wonder who thought it was sweet.

My Meg — She wanted to come with me,
A beautiful wish for a girl's!
If Satan hath need of a hand to queen,
Let him follow her sin-black curls.

I warrant she tends the garden path
With another hand in hers, —
I could paint her thought to a touch to-night
Whenever a rose-leaf stirs.

Ah! Meg, it is medicine time.

GLIMPSES

WHERE is the baby our arms have enfolded
All the day long?
(Into the charms of childhood moulded,
Singing a song.)

Where is my daughter, then? bring her to me;
Waiting I stand.

(She goes with a sailor from sea to sea,
Longing to land.)

I'll wait for the sailor to bring me my own,
Wait, for I can.

("Wait!" When he comes, he'll be gray and alone,
Under a ban.)

"Gray and alone! and alone," do you say?
And the other? —

(He will find the door open, the tenant away,
For another.)

HALF-WAY

HALF threescore years and ten!
Another path appears;
Good-bye, now, sweet Illusion,
Thou comrade of young years!

Half threescore years and ten!
Now other days begin;
With love and babe and hearthside,
What more is there to win?

Half threescore years and ten!
If honor be not won,

Have we the heart to win it
Ere winning days are done?

Half threescore years and ten!
The summers pass along
With more of wayside sorrow
And less of wayside song.

Half threescore years and ten!
The early buds are blown;
The coming years are mowers
Who come to meadows mown.

Half threescore years and ten!
Half-way across the stream
A golden bridge is builded;
The builders sleep and dream.

Half threescore years and ten!
We hear it said and say:
"The bridge of Life is only
A golden one-half-way."

HER CARE

HER CARE

How to lead her children
Higher than their birth,
How to give to houses
All their inner worth,
How to keep a love-light
Brighter than a hearth;

How to grow a garden
In a wilderness,
How her daily thought may
Bless and bless and bless,
How to make a sorrow
Less and less and less.

How to bring the light back
When the day is dead,
How to cover deftly
Lack of love or bread,
How when comfort faileth
To seem comforted;

How when words are idle
Silently to bear,
How to clear the by-way
That would lead her — where?
How to be a woman
Is a woman's care.

HYMN OF LIFE

OUR lives — not ours to give or hold —
A day of toil to win a night's repose.
Two nerveless hands — two feet at rest — a
prayer —
For these we wait — thus every life must close.

The hopes we 've fondled may go down,
To come no more in sadder years;
There 's something still to love and keep,
Untorn by fate — unwet by tears.

It may be what our boyhood knew
Of gentle tones in guarded talk —
A look from eyes that ne'er shone false —
A laugh that had not learned to mock:

Or what our manhood felt, a warmth —
Lost sunshine sleeping on the heart —
As round the quaint, low altar knelt
Two forms — two lives untouched by art.

Lo! through our sorrow-latticed way,
How memory comes! — dead years are
hers —
And through the fancies of our hearts,
An old, familiar gladness stirs.

Then all the past is here again;
Sweet lips — no goal but ours they knew —
The hand we inly yearned to keep —
The place where only roses grew.

All these, but ah! a face of white
Gleams from a shroud; long years have rolled
Since in a quiet room he lay —
Nor heard the prayer, nor bells that tolled.

All these, aye, more; — we may not tell
Of what the soul would guarded keep,
That may no outward tremor feel,
Watched o'er, unuttered e'en in sleep.

Whose lips are loosed from passion, quite?
What heart may live its memories down?
How heavy falls the dust of years,
That turns the whited leaves to brown.

How dreaded is the tramp of days,
That leave no music in their track —
That steal the blush from cheek or rose,
And give nor bloom, nor promise back?

But life, and hope, and all we are,
With all the love our deeds have won,
Are but a handful in the shroud —
How soon the sexton's task is done!

IN A QUARRY

BEAT, beat, beat,
I toil in a quarry alone,
Till the day goes under the sea;
I hammer and rift the stone.

Beat, beat, beat,
Will never the truth be known?
With every blow my life
Goes into the stolid stone.

Beat, beat, beat,
To-morrow the visitors come;
Whatever may happen, my blocks,
To them be never so dumb!

Beat, beat, beat,
You have gathered about my knee,
When the dear, indifferent night
Held nothing so sweet for me.

Beat, beat, beat,
O hearts that have hope with you there!
By the altar my hand hath hewn,
In the rapture and pause of prayer,

IN DEBT

(Beat, beat, beat,)
In the lull of the hymn, ye hear
As it were an imprisoned heart,
O'erlaboring somewhere near.

Beat, beat, beat,
Ye may build whatever ye will,
But mark it, a ruin will creep
O'er column and cope and sill.

IN DEBT

A BIRD sings all the summer through,
Ne'er leaving the old song for the new,
And the words are, or they seem to be,
"You owe me; you; you, you owe me."

A bud about to bloom
For a dead hand in my room,
A hand but lately warm and wet
And sweet as 't were shut on a violet; —
God knows, — o'er all that flies or flows
What I may owe to that one rose.

A ship is coming in; she brings
The latest song a poet sings,
Many a sailing league a-lee
Over the sea and over the sea;

And never her swan-white sails are set
But she bringeth me deeper and deeper in debt; —
For all, if the singer should sing no more,
The ship would come as she came before.

O bird that constant sings!
O bud about to bloom!
O ship whose coming brings
A glory for my gloom, —
New brawn to brain and loin,
When every song is done,
When every leaf is blown,
When every voyage is run,
I own, with shame I own,
I can but pay
In current clay
The debts I owe in coin.

INTERCHANGE

EACH day a thousand joys are born,
Each night a thousand joys lie dead,
 And there they lie unburied,
 Forlorn, forlorn,
Till grief comes up to bury them
With fit and tender requiem.

A LATER VIEW

Each day a thousand griefs are born,
Each night a thousand griefs lie dead,
And there they lie unburied,
Forlorn, forlorn,
Till joy comes up to bury them
With fit and tender requiem.

A LATER VIEW

I USED to wonder when a boy,
When life was life and time a toy,
Why men were old and why they went
Along their way so bowed and spent.

It is no wonder now to me;
For when they pass I seem to see
Upon the shoulders of them all
The burdens that the years let fall.

My sight is clearer now than then;
I find myself a man with men;
Now I begin to feel and see
What things the years let fall on me.

What things to bow me or to break!
What things to hope for others' sake!

MAID OF ALLEVOU

121

What things to hinder or to blind!
What things to bind me or unbind!

I do not know; they may be less
Than others bear. The Lord I bless,
As I would try to though they were
More than they are and heavier.

I dare not hope; I can but pray,
O ye, my brothers by the way!
I may not add the lightest care
To burdens ye already bear.

MAID OF ALLEVOU

MORNING dawned upon Allevou;
Sunbeams, barefoot, softly crept,
Kissing from the wondering blossoms
Tears the weary night had wept —
Heavy tears the night had wept.

In the valley stood a dwelling —
Closed and barred the oaken door;
But the beams, the windows forcing,
Played about the sanded floor;
Romped and quivered on the floor.

MAID OF ALLEVOU

None may know for whom they waited —
Why they tarried none may tell;
Yet we thought we heard among them —
Lispings such as these — ah! well,
Maybe 't would not do to tell.

Soon the door swung on its hinges
Slowly, with a drawling creak,
And a maid stood on the threshold —
Fair she was as Powers' Greek;
Fair as Powers' marble Greek.

O! that form was rarer, sweeter
Than a dream of Raphael's;
And her voice in echoes lingered
Like the mellow talk of bells;
Like the distant sound of bells.

Up the valley and the hillside
Fled she like a frightened fawn;
None may know, and none need ask me
Why she flew, bareheaded on;
Why at all she hurried on.

Look! dost see her dark hair streaming?
Note her cheek — its crimson glow.
Is she — nay, she can't be dreaming —
Is she mad? — why flies she so?
Madness only hurries so.

A MILLER'S MADRIGAL

123

Lo! she stays — athwart her features
Signs of bitter anguish roll;
Pale, she seems to sink, exhausted,
On a soft and mossy knoll;
Sinks she softly on a knoll.

And her voice was strangely lifted —
Neither soft, nor sweet, nor low:
“Susan, bring the salve!” halloed she;
“Trying to head off that heifer,
I have been and stubbed my toe —
That — infernal — critter — oh!”

A MILLER'S MADRIGAL

A GRIST in the hopper, the sun on the sill,
An' a heigho!
Lucky the lane that comes out at a mill,
An' a heigho!
Over his profit the honey-bee hums,
Out of his blanket the butterfly comes,
An' a heigho, an' a heigh!

The Doctor comes up on his mite of a mare,
An' a heigho!
We agree this old world is all out o' repair,
An' a heigho!

But we leave it alone in our neighborly chats,
An' he mixes a mess for my beggarly rats,
An' a heigho, an' a heigh!

The 'Squire, o' late, he rides double with Care,
An' a heigho!

Two mouths at a manger have left his mow
bare,
An' a heigho!

He never calls for the foot o' my score,
Till it runs from the rafter clean down to the
floor,
An' a heigho, an' a heigh!

The Parson's the best o' the black-coated clan,
An' a heigho!

There is wheat he makes out in the branniest
bran,
An' a heigho!

He never grudges a grain o' my toll,
He has an eye for a shoat or a foal,
An' a heigho, an' a heigh!

The sun's at the gable, come hurry, old wheel,
An' a heigho!

What say, my good widow, a coin in your meal?
An' a heigho!

'T was in your corn, maybe, the Lord only
knows,

He tempers the lamb — I forget how it goes,
An' a heigho, an' a heigh!

The greater the worry the lighter the gain,
An' a heigho!

The deeper the furrow the better the grain,
An' a heigho!

The thicker the stubble the fuller the bin,
The darker without side the lighter within,
An' a heigho, an' a heigh!

There are haps in the air that a minute may bring,
An' a heigho!

For a cock is more sure of his head than a king,
An' a heigho!

So I sing out the days in my own merry mill,
A grist in the hopper, the sun on the sill,
An' a heigho, an' a heigh!

MORGAN STANWOOD

Cape Ann, 1775

MORGAN STANWOOD, patriot!
Little more is known;
Nothing of his home is left
But the doorstep stone.

Morgan Stanwood, to our thought
You return once more;
Once again the meadows lift
Daisies to your door.

Once again the morn is sweet,
Half the hay is down, —
Hark! what means that sudden clang
From the distant town?

Larum bell and rolling drum
Answer sea-borne guns;
Larum bell and rolling drum
Summon Freedom's sons.

And the mower thinks to him
Cry both bell and drum,
"Morgan Stanwood, where art thou?
Here th' invaders come!"

"Morgan Stanwood" need no more
Bell and drum-beat call;
He is one who, hearing once,
Answers once for all.

Ne'er the mower murmured then,
"Half my grass is mown,

Homespun is n't soldier-wear,
Each may save his own."

Fallen scythe and aftermath
Lie forgotten now;
Winter need may come and find
But a barren mow.

Down the musket comes. "Good wife, —
Wife, a quicker flint!"
And the face that questions face
Hath no color in 't.

"Wife, if I am late to-night,
Milk the heifer first; —
Ruth, if I 'm not home at all, —
Worse has come to worst."

Morgan Stanwood sped along,
Not the common road;
Over wall and hilltop straight,
Straight to death he strode;

Leaving her to hear at night
Tread of burdened men,
By the gate and through the gate,
At the door, and then —

Ever after that to hear,
When the grass is sweet,
Through the gate and through the night,
Slowly coming feet.

Morgan Stanwood's roof is gone;
Here the doorstep lies;
One may stand thereon and think, —
For the thought will rise, —

Were we where the meadow was,
Mowing grass alone,
Would we go the way he went,
From this very stone?

Were we on the doorstep here,
Parting for a day,
Would we utter words as though
Parting were for aye?

Would we? Heart, the hearth is dear,
Meadow math is sweet;
Parting be as parting may,
After all, we meet.

NOVEMBER

BEFORE THE HEARTH

I

Life sings

REMEMBER, love, remember,
There hath been light upon the hearth
Before the hopeless ember,
And June had filled a month with mirth
Before the bare November.
Remember, love, remember
The bygone light on hearth and wall,
And not the hapless ember, —
The song and bloom and gleam and all
Of June and not November:
Remember, love, remember.

II

November sings

Remember, love, remember!
Who sings before my face to-day,
Of me as bare November?
Not they who happy pluck away
The apple from the ember;

Remember, love, remember,
Not they who see the light to come,
The beam below the ember, —
Who keep the hearth-side sunny from
November to November:
Remember, love, remember!

NOW

I 'm alone in my chamber to-night, Harry,
Alone with the listening night, —
And a phantom entereth the room, Harry,
As soft as the stealthy light.
And it stands there silently bending
Its eyes to my chained gaze, —
Methinks 't is a ghost from the past, Harry,
With the roll of my misspent days.

It comes to my shuddering form, Harry,
And its fingers are on my brow;
And it says, with a voice so sad, Harry,
"I 'm the oft-discarded Now.
Ye have tossed me aside from your pathway,
To welcome a future time;
And ye sigh for the lagging past, ever
With sorrow and words sublime."

O! her touch is so icy and dank, Harry,
That it freezes my throbbing heart; —
O! it rests on my shrinking brow, Harry,
And giveth my soul a start.
Like a ghost and a spur it comes, Harry,
To startle my listless life —
And my thoughts do ebb and flow, Harry,
Like the tide of a deadly strife.

She holds in her hand a scroll, Harry,
A scroll with a penciled wreath;
And my name is written above, Harry,
Not a word nor an act beneath.
From my lips she taketh the bowl, Harry,
The bowl with the Lethean draught,
Which we oft together have praised, Harry,
And together a bumper quaffed.

And she leaves in my hand a scroll, Harry,
The scroll with a circling wreath;
“Your name is above,” she says, Harry,
“Go finish the blank beneath.
Let the bowl of Oblivion stain ne’ermore
Thy lips with its deadly tide; —
The Past is a creeping hearse, ever,
Where the corse and the sexton ride.

"Go toil in the vineyard and field, sluggard,
Broad scatter the waiting seed,
That the harvest may shine in thy storehouse,
For the day of thy wintry need.
Bear a couch to the wounded and weary,
A pall to the pulseless slain;
And thy heart shall grow light, as the fever
Of indifference leaveth thy brain."

I am hearing her faint, slow step, Harry,
As it falls on the downward stair,
And the tears from my eyes drop, drop, Harry,
Like the step that is falling there.
I would come to thee fain to-night, Harry,
With the grief of my tortured soul, —
And bear to thy listless touch, Harry,
A pen and the empty scroll.

Let us both to the world's broad fields, Harry,
Put our hands to the searching plough.
"Not a thought of the future or past," Harry,
Whispers the prompter, Now.
Let us heed not the changing mirage, Harry,
That gleams in the future's false sun;
But work with a courage sublime, Harry,
Till life and its cares are done.

OVER

EARTH's winding-sheet that drips and drips,
A sudden reach of the kindled sea,
A wind that is oftener good than ill,
A sweet forerunner preëmits a tree,
And the winter is over.

The annual wane of green and bloom,
Families under the cloistered eaves,
An apple drops from its crooning nurse,
You look for a hand among the leaves —
The summer is over.

A breath of the viol brief and sweet,
An answering ripple of two and two, —
Was it a wail of the wind or no?
Perhaps it is well that no one knew —
The revel is over.

One in a cradle, the light of home,
Then two at the altar hand in hand,
The broken earth, a wreath just laid,
A gate is shut on the golden land,
And the lesson is over.

OVERNIGHT

YESTERDAY a forward bud
With a promise filled the room,
And to-day there in its stead,
Blessing, stands a rose in bloom.

Yesterday we thought to see
Leaf by leaf its life unclose,
Or to feel the moment flush
When the bud became a rose.

So a child we keep a child
As we keep a bud unblown;
All at once, a blush, a glance,
Comes the maiden woman grown.

Life, O Life, your every chance
We waylay and flash surmise;
But it comes another way,
In an unimagined guise.

Watch and listen when we may —
Out of love or out of fear —
Something will go by unseen
Or unheard that we would hear.

But I hope with all my hope
 I may know the now unknown,
 Sometime hear the now unheard,
 See, and not with eyes alone.

And indeed I make no doubt,
 Soon or late, this perfect sight
 Through the dark will come to me,
 As the rose came — overnight.

QUESTION AND ANSWER

HEART, O my heart in me, say, why dost thou sing?
 For the spring hath gone by,
 And the summer hath ripened; on changeable wing
 Are no birds in the sky,
 The lea hath no joy on its withered brown breast,
 And the sea is so gray,
 Why seek in the east and the south and the west
 For the soul of the day?

I dreamed with the sparrow, ran after the spring,
 Saw the change in the sea;
 I buried, ah! slowly, the joy that was dead
 In the breast of the lea.
 The birds of the springtime went silent away
 From bough and from nest.
 Some built in my being; the builders anon
 Flew after the rest.

THE RETURN

A BIRD fell out of the sky,
Out-worn by the way;
Her comrades continued their flight, —
What need to delay?
Winging and wearily winging,
Making the most of the day.

Theirs the magnificent sweep
Where the leader may lead;
Hers the indifferent lot
Of a sea-broken weed, —
Day unto desolate day
And night unto need.

Southward her comrades return;
A voice overhead
Calleth to her; she replies,
Her wings are outspread;
Hers the old, comforting life, —
To lead or be led.

ROUTINE

STRAIGHT between two hills beclouded,
To and from their silent shores,
Rows a ferry-man as silent,
Never leaning on his oars.

Hill that holds the coming sunlight,
Hill that holds the waning, too,
Hinders not the restless rower, —
Ever leaving, ever due.

Be the sky or full or empty,
Whether one or none come in,
He must ferry, ever ferry,
Ending only to begin.

Far below him hum the cities,
Far above the mountains dream, —
He must touch the land and leave it
For a path upon the stream;

For a path upon the river
To the hands that beckon, blind,
While the year that lies before him
Mates the year that stands behind.

THE SEEKER

Do I know the hills that hinder,
And the river there between?
Droning mart and mountain dreamy,
And the ferry-man Routine?

Hearts, farewell, my duty presses,
Mine is that familiar oar,
And the year that lies behind me
Mates the year that stands before.

THE SEEKER

"I WOULD I knew," a seeker said,
"Where lies the spring of Poesy;
So many paths before me lie
And every one misleading me."

The clouds above him heard and threw
A hint of shadow on the spring,
A saucy bird crept up and sang
And told him plain as song could sing.

A little leaf unnoted fell,
Towards the spring it crept and flew,
And other leaves chirped after it, —
But leaves are such a chirping crew!

A tiny sunbeam pointed straight
With finger sly as sunbeam could;
But he hath quite enough to hunt
Who follows sunbeams through a wood.

The wind said all that wind can say,
And told and told the leaves to tell,
And many a flower toward it leaned,
And every acorn swung her bell.

The cloud may hint, the bird may sing,
The leaf may creep, the wind may tell,
The sunbeam point, the blossom lean,
The news be rung from bell to bell,

And only one will hear and see,
Who never loses note or hint;
The poet finds alone the spring, —
He comes and goes and leaves no print.

A SOUL'S DOUBT

Two friends were mine in weal and woe;
One lies where grasses fail and grow,
The other walks the busy street;
He meets the very eyes I meet,

STILL TENANTED

But he is dead to me as though
He, too, were under grass and snow.
If gods agree
Which of the three
'T were best to be,
They do not say. Ah! do they know?

STILL TENANTED

OLD house, how desolate thy life!
Nay, life and death alike have fled;
Nor thrift, nor any song within,
Nor daily thought for daily bread.

The dew is nightly on thy hearth,
Yet something sweeter to thee clings,
And some who enter think they hear
The murmur of departing wings.

No doubt within the chambers there, —
Not by the wall nor through the gate, —
Uncounted tenants come, to whom
The house is not so desolate.

To them the walls are white and warm,
The chimneys lure the laughing flame,
The bride and groom take happy hands,
The newborn babe awaits a name.

Who knows what far-off journeyers
At night return with winged feet,
To cool their fever in the brook,
Or haunt the meadow, clover-sweet?

And yet the morning mowers find
No footprint in the grass they mow,
The water's clear, unwritten song
Is not of things that come or go.

'T is not forsaken rooms alone
That unseen people love to tread,
Nor in the moments only when
The day's eluded cares are dead.

To every home, or high or low,
Some unimagined guests repair,
Who come unseen to break and bless
The bread and oil they never share.

A SUMMER MOOD

I LAY me in the growing grass,
A vagrant loving vagrancy;
About me kindred fellows throng,
A very reckless company, —

A THOROUGHFARE

Gay people of the crowded air,
Who follow Joy's recruiting drums;
Nor thrift, nor any thorn, they leave
To-morrow till to-morrow comes.

Who gathers all, would gather more;
Who little hath, hath need of none;
Who wins a race will long to win
Another that is never won.

I fling me in the grass, content
That not a blade belongs to me,
And take no thought for mowing days, —
A vagrant wed to vagrancy.

A THOROUGHFARE

OPEN to their will and way,
Shadow-sandaled feet and bare
Make a by-way dark and lone
Their familiar thoroughfare.

Kings without a kingdom known
Make a royal progress here;
Queens who only lived to lure
Follow clown and cavalier.

Cattle-mongers with their droves
Fill and bar the common way,
While the cattle that they claim
Look more owner-like than they.

Elfin mothers and their broods
Wanton as in elfin-land;
Mermen who forsake the sea
Play in drifts of golden sand.

Gypsy girls with dreary eyes
Mingle with the wondrous train;
When they seem forever by,
Turn to come and go again.

Children of the poet's thought,
That to ruder days belong,
Skip and dance and leer and laugh
In the meshes of a song.

Beings that the painter's touch
Left forever incomplete —
Faces in the sunshine half,
Half in shadow, droll and sweet —

Group and part and group again,
Still to be what they have been —
Dark and light, and light and dark,
Nor all shadow, nor all sheen.

TOO EARLY

Shapes that tongue can never name,
On their faces broken gleams,
Empty tinted trifles down,
Singing only, "We are dreams."

Never blade of grass may grow
Where so many footsteps fall;
Yet a timid bud may bloom
Lowly by the wayside wall.

Gate and bar availeth naught,
Shadow-sandaled feet and bare
Make the by-way of my brain
Their familiar thoroughfare.

And the phantoms will go on,
Still pursuing and pursued,
Till the throne of Thought becomes
Vacant in a solitude.

TOO EARLY

BIRDIE with a troubled mate,
You have come too early;
Spring hath loitered now so late,
Winter's old and surly.

Winter is a landlord grim
To such early comers;
Cheerless are his chambers dim,
Coming out of Summer's.

Birdie, I would like to know
How you came to win her!
Were you swift, another slow?
Say, you lucky sinner!

Maybe you are not a spouse,
But a tricky wooer,
Who hath promised sweeter boughs
Than another to her.

Maybe you are bride and groom
On a wedding visit;
Then the world is all in bloom,
And an Eden is it.

Maybe, though, the wedding-ring
Is a trifle rusty,
And the sharer of thy wing
Grows a moment crusty.

Doth she with a cruel shrug
Of a promise twit you?
Bring a bit of happy slug,
She will fain acquit you.

TOO TRUE

Birdie, don't you think we know
Something of your pickle?
How the brightest joke you grow
Never seems to tickle!

How the sweetest thing you do
Hath no sweetness in it?
How you 're interrupted, too,
Every busy minute?

Birdie, keep your temper, dear,
Humor all her humors!
Spring is loitering so near,
Rumor of her rumors.

TOO TRUE

How oft within for one we wait,
And turn Him empty from the gate!

How oft the Master of the feast
Honors the guest we look to, least!

UNSEEN HANDS

O YEARS, believe me, for I know
Ye would have long since laid me low
But for the hands that lift unseen
The burdens of the day at e'en.

Not always fingers warm though dear,
Nor only voices ye may hear,
Bear off the burdens of the day,
Charm with a charm the care away.

Ah! no, some hands invisible,
So Fancy tells and loves to tell,
Seek the worn places of the heart
And build anew the broken part.

A WANDERER

THE lighted windows of his thought
A poet opened to the day,
And let a little song go out,
To fly away, away, away!

Away, away, away it flies —
The world was made to wander in;

From lip to lip, from land to land,
Where lovers love or spinners spin.

From land to land, from lip to lip —
How sweet the world to wander through!
It found no heart to nestle in
Like that it emptied when it flew.

It came again on weary wing,
To windows closing to the day,
That let the little song come in —
It knew the way, it knew the way.

Into the fastness of his heart,
Where Life had made a sudden stand,
The wanderer came bringing back
A singing heart and empty hand.

“My song,” the dying poet said,
“The world is lost to me for aye;
But thou hast won it, by a chance
Or by a charm, whatever way.

“For I would have my song be more
Than I have been to brother life —
A tinkling brook in desert dreams,
A certain bugle in the strife.”

"Dear heart," the song then sweetly sang,
 "The world is nothing, lost or won;
I come to hover near thee now,
 If charm and chance for thee are done."

The singer breathed the song again,
 Away, away, away it flew.
Who knows where it may be to-day?
 It thrills me, singer, through and through.

Where lovers love or spinners spin,
 There comes a hurrying refrain:
"The world is lost to me for aye."
 They listen, love, or spin again.

"The world is nothing, lost or won,"
 Comes in a tender undertone;
Then love and labor hear and bless,
 And, happy, make the song their own.

And thus his song is neither brook
 Nor battle-seeking clarion;
But sweet no less to brother life,
 It flits and sings though he is gone.

WHO HATH NOT

Who hath not, of his life a part,
Some inner, oft-frequented room,
That hears no footfall but his own,
In days to him of gleam or gloom, —

Who hath not this may garner all
His ripened opportunities;
He never knows, he cannot know,
What Life may be by what it is.

WHY?

Why are our poets bringing
Their ample sheaves, and singing
Their Even-Songs so soon?
What finer light foresee they,
That dims their afternoon?

We wait nor lighter bearers,
Nor any coming sharers,
To make our cup complete, —
Nor touch of happy viols
To make the song more sweet.

WIND THE CLOCK

151

In autumn-time or later,
For lesser song or greater,
We lean a longing ear;
Why fill us with forebodings
That silent days are near?

WIND THE CLOCK

WARDEN, wind the clock again;
Mighty years are going on,
Through the shadow and the dream,
And the happy-hearted dawn.
Wind again, wind again, —
Fifty hundred years are gone.

Through the harvest and the need,
Wealthy June and dewy May,
Grew the new year from the old,
Grows to-morrow from to-day.
Wind again, wind again, —
Who can keep the years at bay?

Four-and-twenty conjurers
Lie in wait on land and sea,
Plucking down the startled ship,
Bud-embroidering the tree.
Wind again, wind again, —
We have neither ship nor tree.

A WOMAN'S PRAISE

Four-and-twenty kings to come
Up the never-vacant stair, —
Four-and-twenty dead go down;
Follow, sacred song and prayer.

Wind again, wind again, —
Warden, why delaying there?

To his interrupted dream
Comes the long-entreated day.
What are lesser words to him?
Sweet pursuing voices say, —
“Warden, wind, wind again,
Up the ever-golden way.”

Other hands will wind the clock
While the frequent years go on,
Never noting need or name
Nor the rapture of the dawn.

Wind again, wind again,
Ere the given year be gone.

A WOMAN'S PRAISE

SWEETER than a bird's song
When we look for snow, —
Sweeter than a brook's song
When the brook is low, —
Is her voice.

Lighter than the twilight
On a summer sea, —
Lighter than the daylight
On a dewy lea, —
Is her foot.

Sweeter than all sweetness
When she answers, "yes," —
Lighter than all lightness
When she comes to bless, —
Is herself.

INDEX OF TITLES

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-----|
| After | 9 |
| After All | 93 |
| After Barren Mays | 2 |
| Afterglow, An | 91 |
| "Among the Hills" | 94 |
| An Immortelle | 3 |
| An Intruder | 23 |
| Answer, The | 51 |
| Arbutusing | 94 |
| Before and After | 95 |
| Benison, A | 98 |
| Beset | 98 |
| Beyond the Book | 100 |
| Blown Off | 72 |
| Bohemian Melody, A | 51 |
| Bohemian Melodies | 52 |
| Book-Lover to his Books, A | 102 |
| Bread and Song | 103 |
| Bridges | 53 |
| Brook-Life | 104 |
| Building | 105 |
| Chances, The | 106 |
| Coast-wise | 75 |
| Day of Days, A | 30 |
| Days, The | 107 |
| Day unto Day | 42 |
| Difference, The | 10 |
| Dream, The | 54 |
| Driftwood Gatherer, The | 11 |
| Fallen Castle, The | 108 |
| Far Demesne, A | 109 |
| Fever Fantasy, A | 111 |
| Fisherman's Feint, The | 11 |
| Fishermen, The | 77 |
| Flower of Submission, The | 55 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| Glimpses | 111 |
| Half-way | 112 |
| Her Bouquet | 24 |
| Her Care | 114 |
| Hymn of Life | 115 |
| Idler's Idyl, An | 12 |
| In a Garden | 56 |
| In a Quarry | 117 |
| In Autumn | 57 |
| In Debt | 118 |
| Interchange | 119 |
| In the Sea | 71 |
| It Seems | 27 |
| Jerry an' Me | 13 |
| Land and Sea | 8 |
| Later View, A | 120 |
| Leaves on the Tide | 1 |
| Lines read at the "Procter Gathering" | 35 |
| Looked-For | 15 |
| Lying Bird, The | 58 |
| Maid of Allevou | 121 |
| Miller's Madrigal, A | 123 |
| Misled | 78 |
| Mist | 59 |
| Moravian Melody, A | 59 |
| Morgan Stanwood | 125 |
| Night's Peril, A | 78 |
| November: Before the Hearth | 129 |
| Now | 130 |
| Ocean of Hope, The | 60 |
| One out of Many | 60 |
| One Port alone | 80 |
| Only a Glimpse | 5 |
| On the Brink | 80 |
| On the Lake | 61 |
| On the Loss of the Oneida | 29 |
| Out of the Storm | 26 |
| Over | 133 |
| Over-night | 134 |
| Parting Word, The | 39 |
| Question and Answer | 135 |
| Reared in a Room | 62 |
| Restless, The | 81 |

INDEX OF TITLES

157

| | |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| Return, The | 136 |
| Rose and Thorn | 65 |
| Routine | 137 |
| Sailor's Ditty, A | 85 |
| Sand-Castles | 7 |
| Seeker, The | 138 |
| Seeking | 4 |
| Skipper Hermit, The | 86 |
| Slavonic Melody, A | 66 |
| Soul's Doubt, A | 139 |
| Spring | 66 |
| Still Tenanted | 140 |
| Summer Mood, A | 141 |
| Sunset | 16 |
| Thoroughfare, A | 142 |
| Thrift | 17 |
| Too Early | 144 |
| To One at a Distance | 67 |
| Too True | 146 |
| To the Absent | 68 |
| To the Wind | 69 |
| Unfulfilled | 18 |
| Unseen Hands | 147 |
| Verses | 34 |
| Wanderer, A | 147 |
| While I May | 22 |
| Who Hath Not | 150 |
| Who Knows? | 20 |
| Why? | 150 |
| Wind's Reply, The | 21 |
| Wind the Clock | 151 |
| Woman's Praise, A | 152 |
| Your Bark and Mine | 89 |

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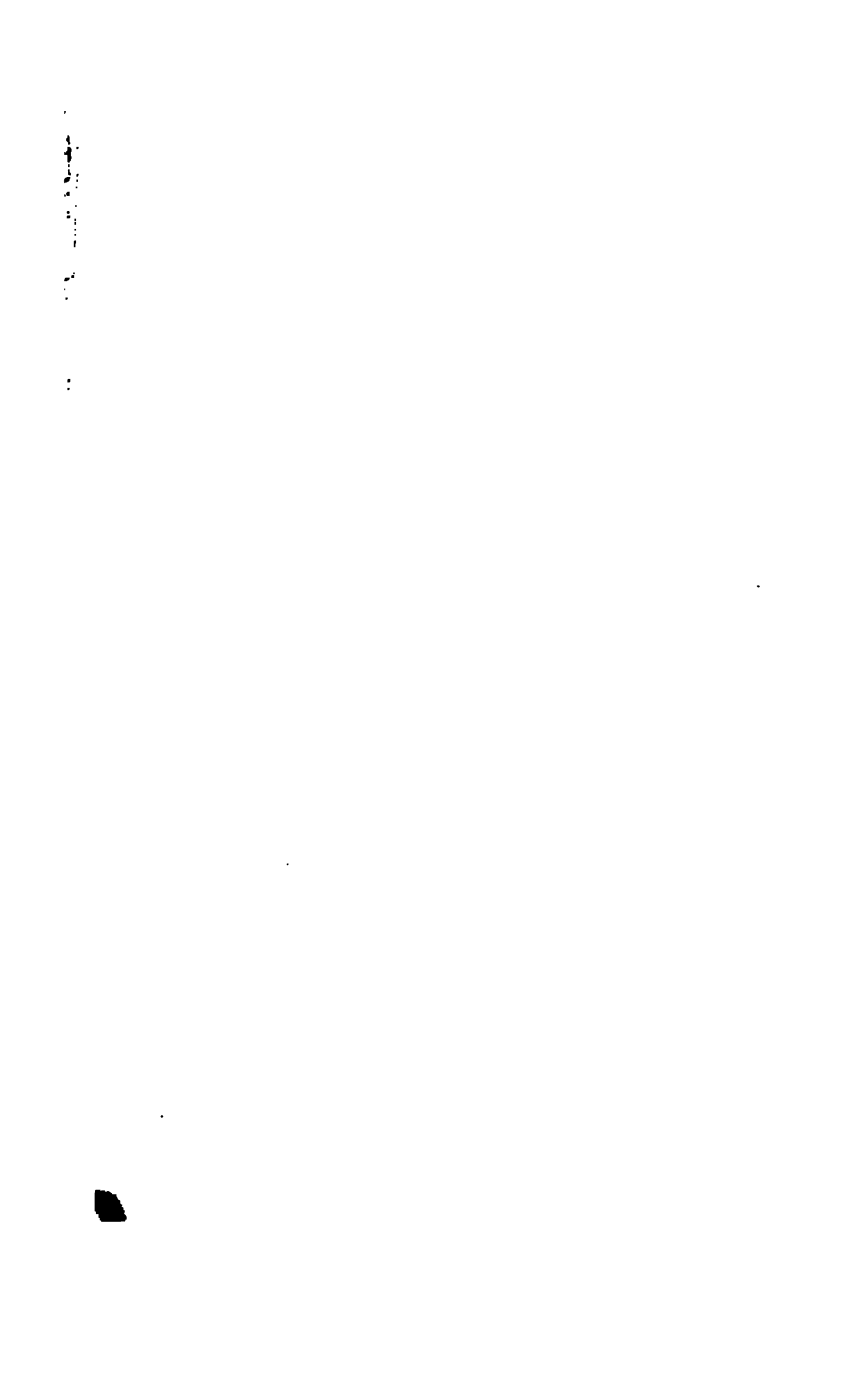
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8



